THURSDAY 13 NOVEMBER | 7PM
DR JOHN GALLAGHER CONCERT CHAMBER

WITH NICK FLETCHER, PIANO

TE PAE KŌKAKO
TANZOS
THE AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND OPERA STUDIO

Programme

PIANIST - NICK FLETCHER

Aria: **I Know That My Redeemer Liveth** – *Messiah* – G.F. Handel

Recit and Aria: **Solitudini amiche ... Zeffiretti lusinghieri** - *Idomeneo* – W.A. Mozart

Duet: **Crudel! Perchè finora** – *Le nozze di Figaro* – W.A. Mozart – With Tomairangi Henare

Banalités FP107 – Francis Poulenc

1. Chanson d'Orkenise
2. Hôtel
3. Fagnes de Wallonie
4. Voyage à Paris
5. Sanglots

Interval

Five Hebrew Love Songs – Eric Whitacre

1. Temuná (A Picture)
2. Kalá kallá (Light Bride)
3. Lárov (Mostly)
4. Éyze shéleg! (What Snow!)
5. Rakút (Tenderness)

Aria: **Ma voila seule... Comme autrefois** – *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* – Georges Bizet

Folk song: **Arirang (아리랑)** - Arr. James Ra

Nick Fletcher

The British Pianist and Conductor Nick Fletcher is the Deputy Head of Music for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and was educated at the University of Edinburgh, Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio. He has worked as a freelance repetiteur with multiple UK opera companies, including Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North and English National Opera. From 2016-2018 he was a member of of the Jette Parker Artists programme at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, making his main stage debut conducting the Orchestra of Opera North in the 2018 Jette Parker Summer Show. After his time on the programme ended he immediately returned to the Royal Opera to work on the 2018 Ring cycle with Sir Antonio Pappano, who he subsequently assisted on the Royal Opera's 2024 Japan tour.

From 2018-2025 he was a member of music staff at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen where, alongside his regular duties he conducted over 35 performances for the company, including a Danish tour of Cosi fan Tutte with the Aalborg Symphony, and in Copenhagen conducting performances of, amongst others Kat'a Kabanova, Simon Boccanegra and Le Nozze di Figaro. He also conducted the Danish National Orchestra in the first week of rehearsals for their concert performance of Parsifal with Adam Fischer.

Programme Notes

Aria: I Know That My Redeemer Liveth - *Messiah* - G.F. Handel (1685–1759)

Handel composed Messiah in 1741 in just over three weeks, setting a libretto compiled by Charles Jennens entirely from Biblical texts. The oratorio was first performed in Dublin in 1742. "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" opens Part III and expresses hope in resurrection. Handel's music follows the natural rhythm of the text from the Book of Job, and conveys faith and assurance rather than grandeur.

Recit and Aria: Solitudini amiche ... Zeffiretti lusinghieri - *Idomeneo* - *W.A. Mozart (1756–1791)*

Mozart's *Idomeneo*, an opera seria written when he was twenty-four, was composed for Munich and marks one of his most mature early works. The aria "Zeffiretti lusinghieri" is sung by Ilia, a Trojan princess who has fallen in love with her captor's son. In the recitative "Solitudini amiche," she confides her feelings in solitude, and in the aria that follows, she asks the gentle breezes to carry her love to Idomeneo's son, Idamante.

ILIA
Solitudini amiche, aure amorose,
Piante fiorite, e fiori vaghi! Udite
D'una infelice amante
I lamenti, che a voi lassa confido.
Quanto il tacer presso al mio vincitore,
Quanto il finger ti costa afflitto core!

Zeffiretti lusinghieri,
Deli volate al mio tesoro:
E gli dite, ch'io l'adoro,
Che mi serbi il cor fedel.

E voi piante, e fior sinceri,
Che ora innaffia il pianto amaro,
Dite a lui, che amor più raro
Mai vedeste sotto al ciel.

ILIA
Friendly solitude, amorous breezes,
blossoming plants and lovely flowers, hearken
to the laments of an unhappy lover who,
forsaken, confides in you.
How much it costs my afflicted heart to keep silent
and pretend, when close to him who conquered it!

Gently caressing zephyrs,
oh fly to my beloved
and tell him I adore him
and to keep his heart true to me.

And you plants and tender flowers
which my bitter tears water,
tell him that you never saw
a love more rare beneath the sky.

Sarah Mileham - Soprano

Sarah Mileham is a 23 year old Soprano from Tauranga and now based in Hamilton. In 2023, she finished her Bachelor of Music in Classical Performance at the New Zealand School of Music, Victoria University of Wellington under the tuition of Jenny Wollerman. She has recently completed her Bachelor of Music with first class Honours at Waikato University with Soprano Anna Leese as her teacher. Sarah is currently studying with Soprano Nikki Li Hartliep.

In 2024, Sarah made her debut with NZ Opera singing 'Maria Bertram', a principal role, in Mansfield Park by Jonathan Dove and 'Countess Ceprano' in Verdi's Rigoletto. She also sang the role of Adina in Donizetti's The Elixir of Love NZO Schools Tour, which travelled Aotearoa. Sarah is an alumni of the New Zealand Opera School (2024, 2025)

Duet: Crudel! Perchè finora - *Le nozze di Figaro* - W.A. Mozart - With Tomairangi Henare

Le nozze di Figaro, composed to a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte, continues the story of Beaumarchais' play *The Barber of Seville*.

"Crudel! Perchè finora" takes place in Act III. Count Almaviva has been trying to seduce Susanna, who is to be married to Figaro. Susanna plays along, as a part of Countess Rosina and her plans to expose the Counts infidelity, and promises to meet him in the garden on the night of her wedding. The Count is blissfully unaware of the truth.

Song cycle: *Banalités* FP107 - Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

Composed in 1940, *Banalités* is one of Poulenc's most beloved song cycles. The five songs set poems by Guillaume Apollinaire, capturing a wide range of moods—from the playful wanderlust of *Voyage à Paris* to the quiet languor of *Hôtel* and the profound melancholy of *Sanglots*. Poulenc's characteristic mix of irony, tenderness, and honesty gives each miniature a vivid and lived-in quality.

1. Chanson d'Orkenise

This opening song paints a bustling scene outside a city gate, where travellers are questioned by guards. Poulenc's brisk rhythms suggest marching feet and casual conversation. Beneath the surface, the poem's irony emerges: freedom and control coexist uneasily, hinting at the tension of wartime France.

Through the gates of Orkenise a waggoner wants to enter. Through the gates of Orkenise a vagabond wants to leave.

And the sentries guarding the town rush up to the vagabond: 'What are you taking from the town?' 'I'm leaving my whole heart behind.'

And the sentries guarding the town rush up to the waggoner: 'What are you carrying into the town?' 'My heart in order to marry.'

So many hearts in Orkenise! The sentries laughed and laughed: Vagabond, the road's not merry, Love makes you merry, O waggoner!

The handsome sentries guarding the town knitted vaingloriously; The gates of the town then slowly closed.

2. Hôtel

A portrait of idleness, this song sets a brief poem where the speaker refuses to work, preferring to smoke and rest. Poulenc's slow, jazz-tinged harmonies and understated melody give the song a sense of suspended time — a moment of quiet escape.

My room is shaped like a cage the sun slips its arm through the window. But I who want to smoke to make mirages. I light my cigarette on daylight's fire. I do not want to work, I want to smoke.

3. Fagnes de Wallonie

Apollinaire's text evokes the bleak landscapes of Wallonia, with its vast plains and distant echoes. Poulenc's setting is spare, with an irregular rhythm and shifting tonal centre that mirror the loneliness and introspection of the poem.

So much utter sadness seized my heart in the desolate upland moss-hags. When weary, I set down in the fir plantation. The weight of kilometres to the roar of the west wind. I had left the pretty wood. The squirrels stayed there. My pipe tried to make clouds in the sky which stubbornly stayed clear.

I confided no secret but an enigmatic song to the dank peat-bogs. The honey-fragrant heather attracted the bees and my sore feet crushed bilberries and whortleberries tenderly united. North, North Life is gnarled there In strong trees and twisted, life there bites death voraciously when the wind howls.

4. Voyage à Paris

After the restraint of the previous song, this is bright and quick, celebrating the joy of returning to Paris. The accompaniment sparkles, and Poulenc's rhythmic playfulness reflects the poet's affection for the city's liveliness.

Oh! *how delightful to leave a dismal place for Paris. Charming Paris*! *That one day love must have made.*

5. Sanglots

The cycle ends with one of Poulenc's most moving songs. Apollinaire's text links love, faith, and suffering, drawing together human and divine emotion. Poulenc responds with long, expressive lines that build to a quiet, unresolved close — a reflection on endurance rather than closure.

Our love is governed by the calm stars. Now we know that in us many men have their being who came from afar and are one beneath our brows. It is the song of the dreamers who tore out their hearts and carried them in their right hands. Remember dear pride all these memories.

The sailors who sang like conquerors, the chasms of Thule, the gentle Ophir skies. The accursed sick those who flee their shadows, and the joyous return of happy emigrants.

This heart ran with blood and the dreamer kept thinking of his delicate wound. You shall not break the chain of these causes of his painful wound and said to us which are the effects of other causes.
My poor heart my broken heart, like the hearts of all men. Here here are our hands that life enslaved
Has died of love or so it seems. Has died of love and here it is. Such is the fate of all things, so tear out yours too and nothing will be free till the end of time. Let us leave all to the dead and conceal our sobs.

Interval

Song cycle: *Five Hebrew Love Songs* - Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

Whitacre wrote *Five Hebrew Love Songs* in 1996 for his wife, the Israeli soprano and poet Hila Plitmann. The poems were gifts she had written for him during their courtship. The original version for soprano, violin, and piano was later arranged for choir. The music was composed during a winter trip to Germany, inspired by the couple's personal exchanges and the intimacy of Plitmann's brief, image-rich Hebrew texts.
Each poem reflects a moment in their relationship — private observations expressed through natural imagery and simple language.

1. Temuná (A Picture)

The opening song depicts an intimate image of a loved one frozen in time.

Temuná belibí charuntá;
Nodédet beyn ór uveyn ófel:
Min dmamá shekazó et gufách kach otá,
Usaréch al paña'ich kach nófel.

A picture is engraved in my heart;
Moving between light and darkness:
A sort of silence envelopes your body
And your hair falls upon your face just so

2. Kalá kallá (Light Bride)

Written as a playful wedding gift, this short, rhythmic song trades between two sections which resembles the exchange of adoration and light hearted flirting. The words — "Light bride, delicate as a flower" — are accompanied by quick piano figurations and sparkling violin gestures.

Kalá kallá
Kulá shelí,
La la la...
U've kalút
Tishákhílí!

Light bride
She is all mine,
La la la...
And lightly
She will kiss me!

3. Lárov (Mostly)

A roof and the sky observe two lovers.

"Larόv," amár gag la'shama'im,
"Hamerchák shebeynéynu hu ad;
Ach lifnéy zman alu lechán shna'im,
Uveynéynu nishár sentiméter echad"

"Mostly," said the roof to the sky,
"the distance between you and I is endlessness;
But a while ago two came up here,
And only one centimeter was left between us."

4. Éyze shéleg! (What Snow!)

Inspired by the couple's time in Germany, this song marvels at snow — a natural phenomenon unfamiliar to Plitmann from her Israeli childhood. Whitacre paints it with rhythmic pulse and crisp, bright textures that suggest falling flakes.

Ézye shéleg!
Kmo chalomót ktaníim
Noflím mehashamá im.

What snow!
Like little dreams
Falling from the sky.

5. Rakút (Tenderness)

The final song is the most personal. The text's simplicity conceals deep emotion: "He was filled with tenderness." The harmonic language here is the warmest of the cycle, closing on an open sonority that feels unresolved — a continuation of love rather than an ending.

Together, the five songs form a portrait of love as lived experience — playful, fragile, and sincere.

Hu hayá malé rakút;
Hi haytá kasha
Vechól káma shenistá lehishaér kach,
Pashút, uvlí sibá tová,
Lakách otá el toch atzmó,
Veheníach Bamakóm hachí rach.

He was full of tenderness;
She was very hard.
And as much as she tried to stay thus,
Simply, and with no good reason,
He took her into himself,
And set her down
In the softest, softest place.

Aria: Ma voila seule... Comme autrefois - *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* - Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

Bizet wrote *Les pêcheurs de perles* at the age of twenty-four. The opera, set in ancient Ceylon, tells of two men, Nadir and Zurga, whose friendship is tested when they fall in love with the same woman, Leïla, a priestess bound by a vow of chastity.

In this aria from Act II, Leïla reflects on her secret past with Nadir. The recitative "Ma voilà seule" introduces her solitude and uncertainty, while the aria "Comme autrefois" is a moment of release and honesty, truly admitting her real heart to herself.

Leïla
Me voilà seule dans la nuit,
Seule en ce lieu désert
Où regne le silence!
Je frissonne j'ai peur! et le sommeil me fuit!

Mais il est là!
Mon cœur devine sa présence!
Comme autrefois dans la nuit sombre,
Cache sous le feuillage épais,
Il veille près de moi dans l'ombre,
Je puis dormir, rêver en paix!
C'est lui! mes yeux reconnu!
C'est lie! mon âme est rassurée!
O bonheaur! joie inespérée!
Pour me revoir il est venu!
Il est là prés de moi ah!

Leïla
I am here alone in the night,
Alone on this deserted spot
Where the silence reigns!
I shiver, I am afraid! And sleep escapes me!

But he is there!
My heart senses his presence!
As once before in the dark night,
Hidden beneath the thick foliage,
He watches near me in the shadows,
I can sleep and dream in peace!
It is he! My eyes have recognized him!
It is he! My soul is reassured!
O happiness! Joy unexpected!
To see he has come to me!
He is here near me. Ah!

Folk song: Arirang (아리랑) - Arr. James Ra

Arirang is the most widely known Korean folk song, often considered an unofficial national anthem. The song exists in many different regions of Korea, with versions unique to each place, but all share the refrain "Arirang, arirang, arariyo," a phrase evoking both sadness and hope. The song's refrain, "Arirang, arirang, arariyo," conveys both farewell and endurance — emotions central to Korean cultural identity.

Korean-born American composer, conductor, and pianist James Ra is known for bridging traditional and Western idioms in his arrangements. His version of Arirang preserves the original melody while enriching it with gentle harmonic colour and flowing accompaniment. The arrangement highlights the song's universality — a simple melody that carries profound emotional resonance.

I am dedicating this piece to my Mother, Sumi Mileham.

Arirang, Arirang, Arariyo... Crossing over Arirang Pass.
The one who abandoned me shall not walk even 4 kilometers before their feet hurt.
Just as there are many stars in the clear sky, there are also many dreams in our heart.
There, over there, that mountain is Baekdu Mountain, where, even in the middle of winter days, flowers bloom.

About Te Pae Kōkako (TANZOS)

Te Pae Kokako - The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio (TANZOS) is a unique 18-month immersive programme here in NZ preparing six exceptionally promising singers for a professional vocal career. TANZOS is the only national opera studio providing a full-time international-level programme. It encompasses the long-held vision of Dame Malvina Major and is available regardless of circumstances as each student is funded by donor-gifted scholarships. Visit www.tanzos.org for more information

Dame Malvina Major Foundation

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

MAJOR SCHOLARSHIP DONORS:

The Dame Malvina Major Foundation

The Freemasons Foundation

Dame Jenny Gibbs

Joan Egan

Anonymous donors

FREEMASONS FOUNDATION

Help us launch the opera stars of the future!

Places on the TANZOS programme are awarded to Aotearoa's most promising and dedicated young singers on a scholarship-only basis . We invite any size of donation to support a place for individual students, enabling us to continue delivering the programme at an international level. To become a Te Pae Kōkako donor, visit www.tanzos.org/support or contact Director, Madeleine Pierard at tepaekokako@waikato.ac.nz

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato