



Here in New Zealand, we feel relatively safe from the virus that is raging across the rest of the world. As our musicians can again take to the concert stage and we celebrate the return of live music shared in communion with our

artists and fellow music-lovers, we acknowledge how quickly circumstance have changed.

Our thoughts go out to everyone who has been and continues to be adversely-affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, but in particular all the violinists who have competed, collaborated and judged over the last twenty years of The Michael Hill International Violin Competition. We acknowledge the devastating impact the virus is having on their ability to perform and earn their livings.

### Anne Rodda

Executive Director Michael Hill International Violin Competition Charitable Trust



# CONTENTS

- 4 Welcome from Chamber Music New Zealand  $\rightarrow$
- 5 Message from Anna Im, 2019 First Prize Winner  $\rightarrow$
- 7 Our Sponsors  $\rightarrow$
- 8 Amalia Hall, Violin  $\rightarrow$
- 10 Stephen De Pledge, Piano →
- 12 Tour Dates and Centres  $\rightarrow$
- **13** Community Outreach →
- 14 Tour Repertoire →
- **15** Programme Notes →
  - **17** Beethoven  $\rightarrow$
  - **19** Gao Ping →
  - 21 Gershwin →
  - 23 Mozart →
  - 25 Saint-Saëns →
- 27 Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra ->
- 28 APO Concert Repertoire →
- **29** About the Competition →



The longstanding relationship between Chamber Music New Zealand and the Michael Hill International Violin Competition is one that we value greatly. I would like to thank Sir Michael and to say how much we enjoy

working with Anne Rodda, Executive Director, and her team. During lockdown our shared commitment to live performing arts guided us as we re-imagined the tour, against a backdrop of constantly changing scenarios.

The 2020 tour that we are able to bring you is both tinged with sadness - that due to the COVID-19 border restrictions the 2019 MHIVC winner Anna Im is not able to come to New Zealand to play for us, but also with hope for the future - with the relaunch of live chamber music concerts right across New Zealand.

I would like to thank one of New Zealand's favourite violinists and 2015 Michael Hill New Zealand Development Prize winner, Amalia Hall for stepping in to perform with another of our favourites – the wonderful pianist Stephen De Pledge.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to the various and many CMNZ supporters who have stayed with us as we continue to navigate through the necessary changes to bring live chamber music back to you all.

### **Catherine Gibson**

Chief Executive Chamber Music New Zealand



# MESSAGE FROM ANNA

I have been so looking forward to coming back to New Zealand this year for my Winners Tour, but the reality of the Covid-19 pandemic means that I'm not able to, so I have the very sad situation now of missing what would have been an amazing opportunity of making music with Stephen De Pledge and the APO, and playing concerts for New Zealanders.

I was in my final year of study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia when the virus hit the world, I came home to South Korea – and I've been well and safe so far.

5

I have been spending the last couple of months doing a lot of practice and keeping as positive as possible but have to say it is



really frightening to see what has so quickly happened to my industry and intended career. My musical idols and peers have seen their livelihood simply disappear, and whilst I am sad I cannot perform this winter in New Zealand, I am so happy to see that New Zealand musicians and audiences can, again, enjoy concerts as they were intended.

My thanks go to Chamber Music New Zealand, the APO and the Michael Hill International Violin Competition for being so sensitive to my situation as well as looking after the health and well-being of their staff and communities. And it's very good that Amalia Hall, also a Curtis graduate, was already in New Zealand and could quickly step in and play the concerts on this tour. I wish Amalia and Stephen safe travels, and good times, and sincerely hope I will have the opportunity in the future to return to New Zealand.

### Anna Im

2019 First Prize Winner

← CONTENTS



### **AMALIA HALL** with STEPHEN DE PLEDGE

The Competition is grateful to our major sponsors for their generous support This tour is made possible through the exceptional collegiality with partners Chamber Music New Zealand and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra



The Michael Hill International Violin Competition is a New Zealand registered Charitable Trust

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# AMALIA HALL, VIOLIN

New Zealand violinist Amalia Hall, renowned for her pure and natural artistry, has been praised for her "compelling... spellbinding performance". A dynamic and versatile musician, she is equally passionate and comfortable as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral leader, and teacher, holding positions as Violinist of NZTrio and Concertmaster of Orchestra Wellington.

Her career extends internationally with consid-

erable successes to her name, including winning 1st prize at the Postacchini, Tunbridge Wells, Janacek, and other international competitions. She is also a major prize winner at numerous others, including the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, Michael Hill International, Joseph Joachim and Premio R. Lipizer competitions. As a teenager, she won all of the major national awards in New Zealand, including the Gisborne International Music Competition at the age of 16, the National Concerto Competition, and National Young Performer of the Year.

Since making her debut at the age of nine with the Auckland Philharmonia, Amalia has been a regular soloist with orchestras in New Zealand, and concertises around the world. She has made concerto appearances with I Virtuosi Italiani, Munich Chamber Orchestra, NDR Radiophilharmonie, National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan, Filarmonica Marchigiana, Mexico State Symphony Orchestra, United Strings of Europe and others.

Her extensive performing experience includes concerti, recitals and chamber music throughout Europe, USA, South Africa, Australia, China, Vietnam, Mexico, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Argentina and NZ; touring for Chamber Music New Zealand, Curtis on Tour, as a member of the NZ Chamber Soloists; and recording chamber music for Bridge Records and Atoll Records. Amalia has held teaching positions at the University of Waikato and has given masterclasses at universities and conservatories in Italy, England, Uzbekistan and Mexico.

Amalia studied at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music with Pamela Frank and Joseph Silverstein, preceded by studies at the University of Auckland with Dimitri Atanassov.

### amaliahall.com

← CONTENTS

# STEPHEN DE PLEDGE PIANO

New Zealand pianist Stephen De Pledge studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he won the Gold Medal in his final year. After winning the NFMS Young Concert Artist Award he made his debuts in the Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and St John's Smith Square in London, and broadcast for

BBC Radio 3 and BBC2 television.

His concerto performances have included appearances with the Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony, New London, BBC Scottish Symphony and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras. His solo performances in recent seasons have taken him to Cologne, Paris and New York, as well as throughout New Zealand and Australia.

Stephen's extensive discography includes works by Bliss, Barber, Messiaen, Shostakovich, Brahms, Mussorgsky and Prokofiev. He has worked with a great number of composers, making world premiere recordings for Arvo Pärt, Henryk Gorecki and Ned Rorem. Stephen currently holds a teaching position at the University of Auckland.

### stephendepledge.com



# TOUR DATES & CENTRES

SUNDAY 26 JULY	ARROWTOWN	4:00pm The Lodge at The Hills
MONDAY 27 JULY	INVERCARGILL	7:30pm Civic Theatre
TUESDAY 28 JULY	DUNEDIN	7:30pm Glenroy Auditorium
WEDNESDAY 29 JULY	CHRISTCHURCH	7:30pm The Piano
THURSDAY 30 JULY	NELSON	7:30pm NCMA
FRIDAY 31 JULY	HAMILTON	7:30pm Gallagher Centre for Performing Arts
SATURDAY 1 AUGUST	NEW PLYMOUTH	7:30pm TSB Showplace
SUNDAY 2 AUGUST	WHANGANUI	4:00pm Concert Chamber Whanganui War Memorial Centre
TUESDAY 4 AUGUST	NAPIER	7:30pm MTG Century Theatre
WEDNESDAY 5 AUGUST	PALMERSTON NORTH	7:30pm Globe Theatre
<b>THURSDAY 6 AUGUST</b> Piano for Wellington performan kindly provided by	WELLINGTON ce	7:30pm The Public Trust Building
SUNDAY 9 AUGUST	AUCKLAND	5:00pm Town Hall Concert Chamber
Amalia performing with t	he Auckland Philharmor	nia Orchestra:

Amalia performing with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra:

**THURSDAY 13 AUGUST** 

AUCKLAND

7:30pm Auckland Town Hall

The Auckland concert is being recorded for later broadcast by RNZ Concert



← CONTENTS

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

# ANNA IM 'SOLOING' WITH CHIRON'S STRING STUDENTS

Presented in partnership with Chiron

Through the power of technology, 2019 winner, Anna Im, will be performing the first movement of Bach's G minor concerto with primary and intermediate string students from the Albany School of Music and the Remuera Music Academy during the July school holidays.

chiron

SONATA CLASS

Presented in partnership with Chiron

Stephen De Pledge and Amalia Hall Friday 17 June, 3 - 5pm Albany School of Music Top New Zealand performing artists present a masterclass for young artists and local music teachers.

## NZCT CHAMBER MUSIC CONTEST

Presented by Chamber Music New Zealand Final Round adjudicated by Amalia Hall and Stephen De Pledge, and will be livestreamed around the world. 7 & 8 August, Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington chambermusic.co.nz/contest

# 2020 TOUR REPERTOIRE

# CHAMBER MUSIC NEW ZEALAND PROGRAMME

RECITAL REPERTOIRE

BeethovenSonata No 5 in F major, Op 24, 'Spring'Gao PingBitter Cold NightGershwinThree Preludes, arr. Heifetz

# INTERVAL

MozartViolin Sonata No 19 in E flat major, K 302Saint-SaënsViolin Sonata No 1 in D minor, Op 75



# PROGRAMME NOTES

This recital programme brings together five works for violin and piano from Austro-Germany, China, the United States, and France, a tour of different cities and different eras from the late 1770s to January 2020. Each work captures a significant moment in place and time. Mozart's Sonata in E-flat major is a work composed on the move, as the 22-year old composer travelled from Salzburg to Mannheim to Paris in search of employment in which his talent could flourish unrestrained. In Vienna, Beethoven's Sonata in F major was the work of a young man whose virtuosity as a pianist and self-possession as an autonomous artist both stunned and alarmed his aristocratic patrons. The Sonata in D minor by Saint-Saëns opens the door to the Société Nationale de France, an organization that Saint-Saens co-founded in 1871 to promote French composers and their music in the face of perceived German musical hegemony following the Franco-Prussian War. By 1885 when Saint-Saëns was completing his Sonata, the Société was becoming divided between those who wanted to open its concerts to non-French music, and a more conservative camp (which included Saint-Saëns) who adhered to their original objectives. The progressives won, precipitating Saint-Saëns' departure from the Société and the beginning of a new chapter in his composing life.

Moving away from Europe, the Russian-American violinist Jascha Heifetz sought a violin concerto from his friend George Gershwin, a work to complement Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Piano Concerto in F major. The Concerto never eventuated, but Heifetz's transcription of Gershwin's *Three Preludes* illuminates an unfamiliar side of a virtuoso violinist famous for his steely reserve on stage. Finally, Gao Ping's *Bitter Cold Night* is a piece composed in 2020 in the early days of a global pandemic that has changed all our lives. Gao Ping's response to the death of Dr Li Wenliang is a stark musical evocation of the uncertainty, anger, and grief that have come to characterize the year.



# Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Sonata No 5 in F major, Op 24, 'Spring' Allegro Adagio molto espressivo Scherzo: Allegro molto Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Beethoven began composing duos for keyboard and violin in the early 1790s: although infrequently performed, his Variations on 'Se vuol ballare' from Le Nozze di Figaro (WoO40) and Rondo in G (WoO41) demonstrate Beethoven's early proficiency in composing works for this combination. Beethoven produced a set of three duo sonatas that were published as his Op 12 in 1799 and dedicated to Antonio Salieri. In this set, and the subsequent Op 23 Sonata in A major, the violin took on an increasingly virtuosic role. Beethoven's fifth sonata for keyboard and violin dates from 1800–1801, and he dedicated the work to one of his Vienna patrons, Count Moritz von Fries. Count Fries was one of Austria's wealthiest men: he hosted many concerts at the Palais Fries, including a performance of Haydn's Creation and the infamous soiree when the pianist Daniel Steibelt engaged in ill-advised contests of virtuosity with Beethoven.

The F major Sonata is sometimes called Mozartian for its mellifluous lyricism and nicknamed 'Spring' for its evocations of verdant renewal. In the *Allegro* both instruments often sing as one voice before breaking into dialogue. The second movement takes us into a rhapsodic realm, the instruments appearing to improvise in sublime affinity. The deliberate misstep between the violin and piano in the *Scherzo* makes a genuine musical joke, denying the musicians the synchronicity they crave. In the finale, we hear Beethoven writing in a manner that induces contentment and joy.

The critic in the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung of May 1802 found much to enjoy in Beethoven's Op 24 Sonata, noting that Beethoven's 'original, fiery, and bold spirit' had sometimes not found 'the friendliest reception...because it occasionally stormed about in an unfriendly, wild, gloomy and dreary manner', but now his dedication to clarity and 'nature' produced music that found favour everywhere. The reviewer particularly enjoyed the *Scherzo* – 'cheerful, but by no means dull ... [and] placed very appropriately in the middle' of the Sonata – as adherence to convention was seemingly the way to a critic's heart.



# **Gao Ping** (1970 - )

### Bitter Cold Night

Subtitled 'in memory of Dr Li Wenliang and dedicated to the "whistle blowers"', *Bitter Cold Night* commemorates Dr Wenliang, the ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hospital who tried to warn his colleagues about a new and fatal SARS-like virus on 30 December 2019. Following his message to fellow medics, Li Wenliang was censored by the government's public security bureau. In early January 2020, Dr Wenliang became sick with a fever and cough, and shortly afterwards he was hospitalized. By 6 February, his life hung in the balance. Meanwhile, Gao Ping was in lockdown in Chengdu:

On the 6th of February, my pianist friend Sheng Yuan passed to me a message of suggestion from our common friend Feng Hanying, a well-known recording engineer: I make a musical response to the recent situation. Like many others that night, I was glued to my phone following the story of Dr. Li Wenliang who was struggling for life. He passed away later that night. I went to bed very late and had a bad night sleep. The next morning, I sat at the piano and wrote the first notes of *Bitter Cold Night*.

The composition took five days, and also found inspiration from a photograph:

On that same day there was a photo online which everyone was talking about; a very beautiful image of someone writing in huge Chinese characters on a snow-covered riverbank the message *"Farewell*  *to Dr Li Wenliang.*" And I thought that is exactly what I am doing in music for him.

The world premiere of *Bitter Cold Night* took place on 15 April, performed by brothers Frederic and Cornelius Chiu as part of an online concert series. They rehearsed and recorded their parts separately. A few weeks later, here in New Zealand, Amalia Hall and Stephen de Pledge also recorded *Bitter Cold Night* from their homes.

Gao Ping's journal notes that *Bitter Cold Nigh*t moves, 'but with pauses and hesitation, as if searching for an answer, the music travels with difficulty ... long melody ... restraint, solitary, chilly, and calm.' In so doing, *Bitter Cold Night* provides an eloquent tribute to Li Wenliang.



# George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)

*Three Preludes,* arr. Heifetz Prelude No. 1 in B-flat major: *Allegro ben ritmato e deciso* Prelude No. 2 in C-sharp minor: *Andante con moto e poco rubato* Prelude No. 3 in E-flat minor: *Allegro ben ritmato e deciso* 

Following the success of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and other large-scale works in the mid–1920s, the composer decided to compose a cycle of twenty-four preludes for piano, one in every key (following the example of J.S. Bach's Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues) but in a jazz-infused idiom appropriate to the time. By December 1926, five preludes were complete, and Gershwin premiered them in a performance at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, alongside a selection of his songs with the contralto Marguerite d'Alvarez. He then published three of the preludes in 1927. Gershwin never completed the cycle of twenty-four preludes, but the *Three Preludes* became a cornerstone of American keyboard repertoire.

Jascha Heifetz, three years younger than Gershwin, had left Russia for the United States in 1917 and became a US citizen in 1925. He later told Schuyler Chapin that 'Gershwin was a good friend of mine... we often played together. I asked him to write a concerto for the violin, but he died before he had a chance to do it.' Heifetz instead made transcriptions for violin and piano of several Gershwin pieces, including songs from *Porgy and Bess*, and the *Three Preludes*. These were some of the transcriptions that Heifetz would play as encores after his recitals: a recent study of Heifetz's performances indicates that he sometimes performed as many as seven encores (the average number being three) picked from a wide variety of transcriptions of music by Mendelssohn, Richard Strauss, Debussy, Albéniz, Gershwin, and many others.

In his transcriptions of the *Preludes*, Heifetz captured the languorous drollery of Gershwin's *Preludes*, as well as their vitality (one contemporary of Gershwin wrote that his 'exuberant vitality and many-sided zest for life knew no bounds'). Heifetz's version maintains the *Preludes'* spare texture (recalling Gershwin's words that American 'popular music asks for staccato effects, for an almost stencilled style') while creating an élan-filled dialogue between violin and piano.



# Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Violin Sonata No 19 in E flat major, K 302 *Allegro Rondeau: Andante grazioso* 

In the 1770s Mannheim held many attractions for musicians. The Elector Palatinate, Karl Theodor, provided good conditions and remuneration for court musicians and composers. Leopold Mozart was confident that if Wolfgang travelled there and made a good impression on the Elector, he would be 'appointed permanently and with a good salary.' Mozart duly made a good impression on the Elector, but on 8 December 1777 he learned that there would be no permanent post. Despite this disappointment, he remained busy, composing, and finding opportunities to teach and perform. The Sonata in E-flat major, K 302 for keyboard and violin dates from this time.

Mozart and his mother then travelled to Paris, where Mozart's mother would die from fever on 3 July 1778. In Paris, Mozart arranged for Jean Georges Sieber to publish six sonatas for keyboard and violin – including the Sonata in E-flat major – as his 'Op 1.' Mozart left Paris before he could check the proofs, writing to his father, from Strasbourg on 2 November 1778:

It is entirely due to ... hurrying up my departure that my Sonatas have not yet been engraved or have not appeared .... And when they do come, I shall probably find them full of mistakes. If I had stayed only three days longer in Paris, I could have corrected them. The Sonata in E-flat is an ebullient work, with obvious equality between the two instruments – rather than a violin obligato accompanying a more technically challenging piano part – and at times the scope of the *Allegro's* gestures suggest a symphonic milieu. The long-built crescendo passages, shared between the violin and piano seem reminiscent of the 'Mannheim crescendo' – one of the virtuosic orchestral effects developed in the Elector Palatine's court ensemble that Mozart would have heard during his visit. Like most of the 'Op 1' Sonatas, the E-flat Sonata has just two movements, and its *Rondeau* is a lyrical dialogue between the two musicians, the return of the main theme providing respite between moments of introspective harmonic darkness.



# Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921)

Violin Sonata No 1 in D minor, Op 75 Allegro agitato – Adagio Allegro moderato Allegro molto

Camille Saint-Saëns completed his Op 75 Sonata for violin and piano in the autumn of 1885 and dedicated the work to a violinist with whose quartet he played chamber music at the Société Nationale de Musique, Martin Marsick. The Belgian Marsick was an early member of the Société (joining in 1871, shortly after Saint-Saëns and his peer founded the organisation) and like his contemporaries was committed to the performance and promotion of French music. He also gave the premiere performance of Saint-Saëns' Violin Concerto No 2 in C major in 1880. Later, Marsick would become a professor of violin at the Paris Conservatoire, numbering George Enescu, Carl Flesch, and Jacques Thibaud among his pupils, and was described by Flesch as 'a medium-sized man of pleasing appearance. His appealing face framed by a small black beard, his vivid, keen eyes and his southern vivacity charmed his fellows, especially of the female sex."

Of Marsick's playing and teaching, Flesch recalled that his teacher was 'restless, always dissatisfied with himself and driven by his thirst for perfection'. Whether Saint-Saëns was conscious of this restlessness and eagerness for perfection when he composed the Sonata in D minor is uncertain. However, the volatility of the opening *Allegro agitato*, which switches restively between compound duple and triple metres – the constant syncopation further disorientating the listener – and the *moto perpetuo* of the Sonata's finale suggest that facets of Marsick's personality were on Saint-Saëns' mind at the time.

Following the *Adagio* conclusion of the Sonata's opening movement, the *Allegro moderato* begins in G minor with the character of a restrained minuet. Saint-Saëns linked this movement with the finale, precipitating its frenetic semiquaver figurations with a long-held chord that resolves not to D major (the key of the finale) but to a momentarily disorientating A major. The scope of this movement, which demands virtuosity and stamina, is reminiscent of Saint-Saëns' violin concertos, while the fusion between violin and piano is so seamless that they sound almost as one instrument.

Programme notes © Corrina Connor, Chamber Music New Zealand 2020



# AUCKLAND PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA



APO is Auckland's professional symphony orchestra, presenting more than 70 performances annually with a comprehensive season of symphonic work and multidisciplinary events.

On 9 July 2020 APO was one of the first orchestras in the world to relaunch its post-Covid 2020 concert season.

Through its numerous APO Connecting initiatives, APO offers opportunities to more than 20,000 young people and adults nationwide.

More than 250,000 people hear the orchestra live each year, in the concert hall and through live streams and radio broadcasts.

apo.co.nz

# AUCKLAND PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA CONCERT REPERTOIRE GREAT CLASSICS: **TCHAIKOVSKY'S VIOLIN**

7.30pm Thursday 13 August Auckland Town Hall Violin **Amalia Hall** 

Suppé	Poet and Peasant: Overture
Tchaikovsky	Violin Concerto
Schumann	Symphony No.4

Suppé's overture from Elmar's comedy *Poet and Peasant (Dichter und Bauer)* is one of his most popular works with around 60 arrangements for different instrument combinations.

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto was famously described as "unplayable" when it was first composed. Today it is recognised as one of the peaks of a violinist's repertoire. Talented New Zealand violinist Amalia Hall is bound to prove the early critics wrong as she takes on this giant concerto.

To round off the evening Schumann's fascinating Fourth Symphony. The first draft of which was written in a rush of creativity in just over a week – a particularly happy phase of Schumann's life.

← CONTENTS

# ABOUTTHE COMPETITION

Established two decades ago by entrepreneur and passionate violinist, Sir Michael Hill, the Michael Hill International Violin competition is seated at the top table of global, classical music competitions.

It is New Zealand's most prestigious classical music competition and arguably one of its key iconic events of the calendar. Closely nurtured by a Board of ardent arts lovers, the biennial "Michael Hill" carefully selects international and leading local luminaries to guide brilliant young talent through competition, intensive master classes and career development. Young violinists emerge enriched, their music advanced and skills broadened.

A combination of exceptional technical prowess and outstanding artistry are the twin cornerstones of a professional violin career in the twenty-first century. The era we live in demands even more from young artists: communications expertise and the charisma and perseverance to cut through the saturated market.

The Michael Hill International Violin Competition takes the young musician and delivers a more rounded performer and prepared individual onto an appreciative, relentless international stage.

The Competition continues to uphold the principles of integrity and authenticity in all its operations. It also upholds the principle of genuine cultivation of talent in all its facets.

For audiences, the Michael Hill International Violin Competition experience is spine tingling and sublime. Today's most thrilling performers' "put it all on the line" – displaying their individual passion, originality and skill, side by side, one after the other, as they vie for the prize that will launch their career.

Beyond New Zealand concert halls, nearly two million around the world experience the performances live through broadcast and live streaming. Past winners have gone on to achieve remarkable success:

- 2001 **Joseph Lin** (Taiwan/USA) Faculty, The Juilliard School, former first Violin, Juilliard String Quartet
- 2003 Natalia Lomeiko (Russia/NZ) Professor, Royal College of Music
- 2005 **Feng Ning** (China) Solo performance career with over 60 concerts per year
- 2007 **Bella Hristova** (Bulgaria) Solo performance career, Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient
- 2009 **Josef Špaček** (Czech Republic) Concertmaster, Czech Philharmonic
- 2011 **Sergey Malov** (Russia), Extensive performing artist, violin, viola, violoncello spalla; Professor Zürich University of Music
- 2013 **Nikki Chooi** (Canada), Concertmaster, Buffalo Philharmonic, former New York Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
- 2015 Suyeon Kang (Australia), violinist Boccherini Trio
- 2017 **Ioana Cristina Goicea** (Romania)
- 2019 Anna Im (South Korea)

Besides delivering exquisite music performed by the next generation of the world's top artists, the Competition is known for rich and enduring relationships it engenders.

For more information on sponsoring or hosting one of our artists, please contact Anne Rodda on **021 434 442** or

### annerodda@violincompetition.co.nz

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- CONTENTS