



# Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts

*providing music in the heart of the city since 1974*

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## Seasons Ensemble

15 06 22

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### Welcome

It is wonderful that you have come. Thank you.

We want your experience today to be the best that it can be and would appreciate you taking a moment to read the following before the concert commences.

**Keep safe** by locating the exit nearest to your seat.

In the event of an earthquake, our recommendation is to **Drop, Cover and Hold**.

**Bon appetit!** You are welcome to have your lunch during the performance. Switching your cell phone to **silent** is important to the performers and other members of the audience. Your support by way of a **donation** and telling others about the concerts would be fantastic and very much appreciated. It does make a difference.

If you wish to contribute by internet banking, our account is 020 534 000 4022 00.

Please put lunch concert in the particulars.

If you wish to photograph or video today's concert, please ask for permission from the performer(s) before the concert begins. This is important.

We invite you now to sit back, relax and **enjoy** the concert.

**Our Mission** is to create a lively, open Christian faith community, to act for a just and peaceful world, and to be catalysts for discovery, compassion and celebration in the capital.

These lunchtime concerts are **advertised** through Radio New Zealand Concert's Live Diary at around 8.10 am on the day of the concert, they are also advertised on Eventfinda, Dominion Post Arts Pages and Arts Wellington online, and listed on St Andrew's website.

To be placed on the email **circulation list** for concert information, please email [wednesday@standrews.org.nz](mailto:wednesday@standrews.org.nz). Also join our facebook group Friends of St Andrew's on The Terrace Lunchtime Concerts, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/315497448862287/>.

Check out the noticeboards in the foyer each time you come.

# Programme

## **Autumn Nest Building - trio for alto saxophone, piano and harp (2021)**

**Michelle Velvin**

*Autumn Nest Building* is the journey of a small bird from hatchling to full flight. The composition begins with the stillness of the nest amongst the treetops. The saxophone intrudes with moments of cracking and tapping as the bird begins to make its way out of the egg. We hear flitterings and flutterings, and poppings and burstings as the wee bird shakes out its feathers and marvels at the birds eye point of view.

## **A Box of Birds - soprano saxophone and piano (2020)**

**Jonathan Berkahn**

Ingrid and Genevieve commissioned Wellington composer and multi-instrumentalist Jonathan Berkahn to write a programmatic piece for soprano saxophone and piano based around the songs of birds. Jonathan has taken five provocative poems by Whitman, Clare, Gascoigne, Shelley and Dickinson to bring sound to the delightful imagery of the poems that you can read below as we play:

### **1. The dalliance of the eagles - Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892)**

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk,  
my rest,)

Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the  
dalliance of the eagles,

The rushing amorous contact high in space  
together,

The clinching interlocking claws, a living,  
fierce, gyrating wheel,

Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling  
mass tight grappling,

In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight  
downward falling,

Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a  
moment's lull,

A motionless still balance in the air, then  
parting, talons loosing,

Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting,  
their separate diverse flight,

She hers, he his, pursuing

## 2. Little Trotty Wagtail - John Clare (1793 – 1864)

Little trotty wagtail he went in the rain,  
And tittering, tottering sideways he  
neer got straight again,

He stooped to get a worm, and looked  
up to get a fly,

And then he flew away ere his feathers  
they were dry.

Little trotty wagtail, he waddled in the  
mud,

And left his little footmarks, trample  
where he would.

He waddled in the water-pudge, and  
waggle went his tail,  
And chirrupt up his wings to dry upon  
the garden rail.

Little trotty wagtail, you nimble all  
about,

And in the dimpling water-pudge you  
waddle in and out;

Your home is nigh at hand, and in the  
warm pig-stye,

So, little Master Wagtail, I'll bid you a  
good-bye.

## 3. Philip my sparrow - George Gascoigne (1525? - 1577), set by John Bartlet (fl. 1606-1610)

Of all the birds that I do know,  
Philip my sparrow hath no peer.  
For sit she high, or sit she low,  
Be she far off, or be she near,  
There is no bird so fair, so fine,  
Nor yet so fresh as this of mine.  
For when she once hath felt the fit,  
Philip will cry still:  
yet, yet, yet, yet, yet, yet, yet,

yet, yet, yet, yet, yet, yet, yet.  
Come in a morning merrily  
When Philip hath been lately fed;  
Or in an evening soberly,  
When Philip list to go to bed.  
It is a heaven to hear my Phipp,  
How she can chirp with merry lip.  
For when she once...

#### 4. A widow bird - Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822)

A widow bird sate mourning for her  
Love

Upon a wintry bough;

The frozen wind crept on above

The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest  
bare,

No flower upon the ground,

And little motion in the air

Except the mill-wheel's sound.

#### 5. 'Hope' is the thing with feathers - Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

'Hope' is the thing with feathers –

That perches in the soul –

And sings the tune without the words –

And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –

And sore must be the storm –

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chillest land –

And on the strangest Sea –

Yet – never – in Extremity,

It asked a crumb – of me.

### Shorter Pieces for Viola and Piano

**Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)**

**arr. for saxophone and harp**

**Chinese Puzzle**

**Untitled Piece**

**I'll bid My Heart be Still**

**Lullaby on an Ancient Irish Tune**

**Clarke** was born and educated in England, she started playing the violin at the age of eight, and she entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1902. When her teacher proposed marriage, however, her father removed her but sent some of the songs she had recently composed to Sir Charles Villers Stanford at the Royal College of Music. As a consequence she became Stanford's first female pupil and it was apparently he who persuaded her to take up the viola. This led to lessons with the great violist, Lionel Tertis and to a distinguished performing career. In 1912, Sir Henry Wood controversially took six women, including Clarke, into the Queen's Hall Orchestra. Her work as a performer of chamber music, usually in all-female ensembles, prospered and took her to the United States.

In 1919 at the height of Clarke's compositional career she tied for first place with the famous German composer Ernest Bloch in a viola sonata composition competition where 73 composers from around the world submitted pieces. Clarke reflected on this win in a 1979 interview giving an insight into the barriers faced by women composers and performers:

*“And when I had that one little whiff of success that I've had in my life, with the Viola Sonata, the rumour went around, I hear, that I hadn't written the stuff myself, that somebody had done it for me. And I even got one or two little bits of press clippings saying that it was impossible, that I couldn't have written it myself. And the funniest of all was that I had a clipping once which said that I didn't exist, there wasn't any such person as Rebecca Clarke, that it was a pseudonym for Ernest Bloch!”*

During the 1920's Clarke's concert violist career was enterprising - as well as tours in America and Europe, she gave concerts in India, China and Japan. Clarke only published twenty works in her lifetime, and there were extensive periods in which she gave up composing altogether. She left nearly eighty pieces in manuscript in her estate.

**Chinese Puzzle:** Composed in 1921 for solo violin and piano, Rebecca Clarke's *Chinese Puzzle* is an intricate study for the violin. Using the pentatonic scale, Clarke bases this short study on typical Oriental themes and harmony which begin distinct and then gradually entangle between the voices as the theme is passed through seamless transitions and and response passages.

**Untitled Piece:** Composed around 1918, *Untitled Piece* employs asymmetrical rhythms, an angular melody and jangling dissonant harmonies. This work reveals Clarke as a mature composer steeped in traditions of nineteenth-century chamber music.

**I'll bid My Heart be Still:** An arrangement of a Scottish tune, *I'll bid my Heart be Still* was Clarke's last work for the viola. The tune is included in *The New National Songbook* (1906), edited by Clarke's teacher Charles Stanford. It seems that she wrote the work with pianist James Friskin in mind (he was Scottish) in the passionate summer of 1944, in the months preceding their marriage. Their romance is documented in a touching series of letters, among the few that Clarke saved. After giving the piece to Friskin he encouraged her to compose more, in a letter dated 24 July 1944: '*After looking again at the last twelve bars for your little viola piece, which I find very moving, it seems to me that you ought to start off again on something larger — I'd almost be willing to bet it's there if you'd only let it come out. What about another viola sonata? Please try.*' But there is no sign that she did try – instead *I'll bid my heart be Still* might be Clarke's message to herself. Clarke's marriage to James Friskin allowed her to make peace with her troubled composer identity by putting it to rest, where it remained dormant, closeted, for many years until Clarke again began to compose.

**Lullaby on an Ancient Irish Tune:** The 1913 *Lullaby on an Ancient Irish Tune* is edgier, with a sinuous winding melody and lilting polytonal exchanges. The open-ended conclusion is mysterious and evocative. As in her 1944 setting of a Scottish tune *I'll bid my Heart be Still*, the melody is not varied but rather placed in the midst of different contexts, keys and textures.

# Algues

(1987) arr. for alto saxophone and harp  
Bernard Andrès (1941 - )

*Algues* (Seaweed) is a suite of seven short movements for flute/oboe or violin and harp. Andrès is well known for his melodic and idiomatic writing style, prolifically composing for the harp and other instrumental combinations that include the harp.

A characteristic of Andrès writing style is a focus on timbre and melodic colour. In *Algues* Andrès plays with subtle harmonics and timbral extended techniques in the harp, such as the xylophonic technique and fingernails, to create the soundworld of the undersea.

*Algues* is soothing and lyrical in style with flowing melodic lines that envisage peaceful underwater scenes with swaying seaweed. Each movement flows almost seamlessly into the next.





# Contact us



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## Coming Up

**22 June - Music for Cello & Piano from  
Eastern Europe: Suk, Lutoslawski and Martinů**  
- Robert Ibell and Rachel Thomson, cello and piano

**29 June - Chamber Music from the NZSM**

**6 July - Oliver Howes, guitar and Ben Kennedy, piano**

**13 July - Aroha String Quartet Academy Concert**

Check out the What's On and Concerts section on our website [www.standrews.org.nz](http://www.standrews.org.nz)  
The only place you'll find reviews of these concerts (and almost all other classical music in  
Greater Wellington) is at [www.middle-c.org](http://www.middle-c.org)

Use it to find out what's coming up in classical music performance through the website's **Coming  
Events listings**