

FROM THE PODIUM

(Musical Moments of Mystery, Madness, Mayhem and Magic)

While Conducting Orchestras



as experienced by

Gary Daverne ONZM

FROM THE PODIUM

OVERTURE

“Hi there, Gary on answer-phone. Please leave a message and I will return your call. Many Thanks.”

That cheerful, perky voice always did return the call, in a period of time.

Gary Michiel Daverne joined an elite group of people when he was appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in the 1996 Queen’s Birthday Honours, in recognition of his services to music.

In November 2000, Gary was presented the prestigious Scroll of Honour by the Variety Artists Club of New Zealand, “for his dedication and skill in his craft and for bringing the joy of orchestral music to the people. We acknowledge his achievements and salute his professionalism.”

In 2005 the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International named Gary a Paul Harris Fellow, “in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world.”

2009 saw him presented with the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) Honored Friend of the Accordion Award “in appreciation for your outstanding contribution to the accordion movement.”

In 2010 he received the honour of being made a Companion of North Shore City, “for exceptional service to the North Shore Community benefiting the present and future generations of the

Auckland region.” This is an occasional award, one not presented annually or lightly.

Also that year 2010, he was recipient of the Variety Artists Club of New Zealand (VAC) prestigious Benny Award, this being the highest award that can be presented to a New Zealand entertainer.

So what was it that made Gary so special to receive these highly acclaimed awards? Where and how did all this begin?

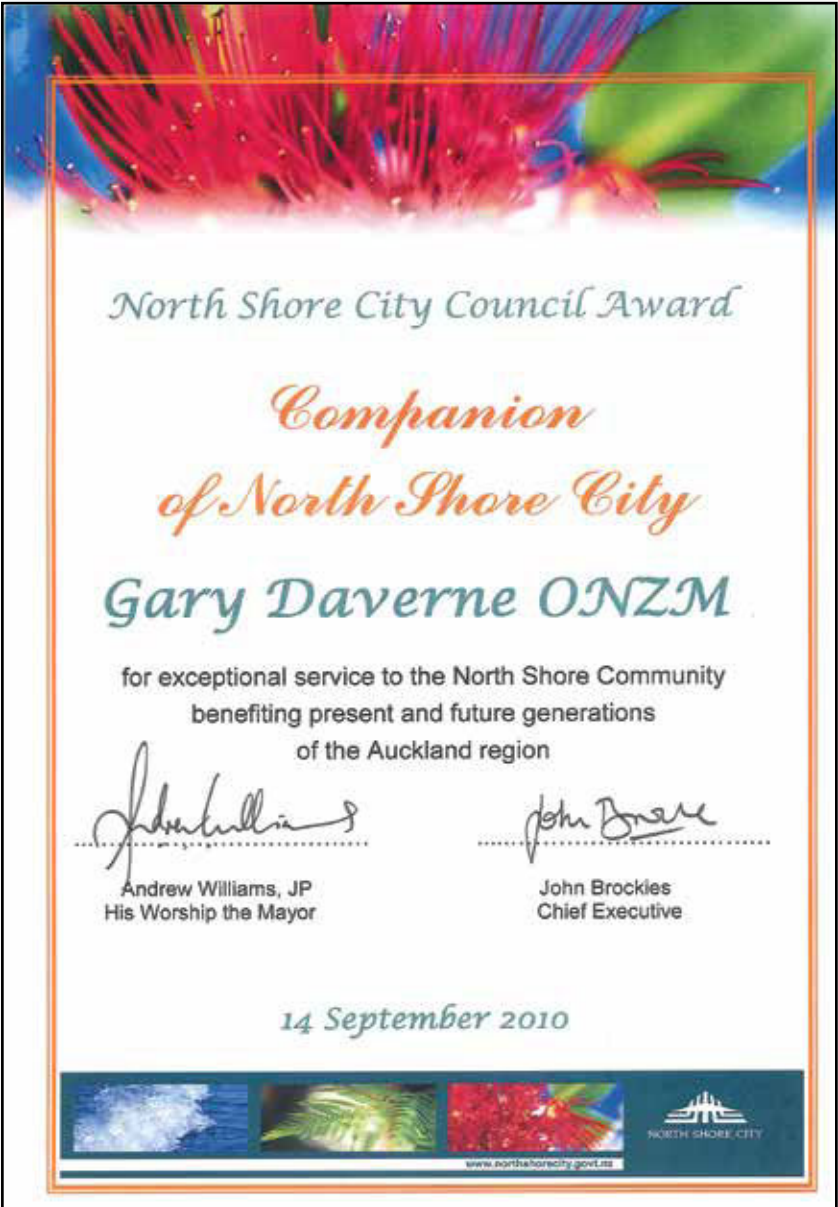


North Shore City Mayor, Andrew Williams presenting Gary with the Companion of the North Shore City Award

His business card reads: *Writes, arranges and produces music.*

He is in fact, a qualified schoolteacher (a commerce teacher, a Head of Department, teaching economics and accountancy) and a recognized composer, arranger and orchestral conductor on the international scene.

Gary’s first conducting experiences were in Auckland, New Zealand. While a teacher in his early twenties, he conducted massed school choirs at annual music festivals and the college orchestra at the school where he taught Commerce and Music.



It was his conducting that inspired this book to be written. For years he would say, “One day I will write a short book about all the many happenings and adventures I have experienced while conducting from the podium.”

But his real venture into conducting did not come until his mid thirties after having spent many years teaching and studying music in London. His conducting career began in 1972 when he musically directed and conducted the highly successful Rock Opera, *Man of Sorrows*, performed at Auckland’s then number one venue, His Majesty’s Theatre.

Man of Sorrows was the launching pad, in all aspects of musical theatre and associated industries for a number of young artists and talent, including Gary. It was here that the initial idea of “From the Podium” originated.

But we must go back quite a few years, to the beginning, to understand this man and his music.

Let me take you there and tell it as if I were he.

Firstly, you may have noticed the unusual spelling of Michael. My father made a spelling mistake on my birth certificate. He put an ‘i’ instead of an ‘a’, so my mother told me. She also told me that I was born in the Borough of Devonport on Auckland’s North Shore, 26th January at 10.20 in the morning. That made my birth sign Aquarius and a Tiger in the Chinese Horoscope.

Astrology has always been influential and significant in my life. Not the daily commercial horoscopes, but the science of Astrology. The wording of the Daverne family crest and coat of arms reads: “Flying. He keeps his eye on the stars.”

One year, when I was President of the Composers Association of New Zealand (CANZ) while studying the birth dates of composers, I discovered that most, and I say most not all, fell into a group of four star signs between October and March. When I published my findings I did receive some flack from “wannabee”

composers who fell outside those four major star signs. One irate young composer said that if he believed in all that nonsense he would never have been a composer. His star sign was Aries. My only comment to him was to research all the prominent composers under that star sign. There is none of significance other than Rachmaninov born 1st April. To this day, I have never heard a composition by that young composer.

Did you know that Rossini seems to be the only Leap Day composer, born on Monday 29th February 1792? I should add that there was a strong peak under Gemini. I was both relieved and delighted to find that Palestrina, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Delius, to name a few, were all Aquarians like myself.

I did ask New Zealand composers to give me their birth dates, to see if the trend continued. Strangely, I got little response. Perhaps they don't have the same passion for the "stars" that I do, or didn't want to be exposed as being in an unacceptable star group.

Around the same time while I was president of CANZ, I also offered the use of Mandrill Recording Studios, of which I was a part owner and director, to New Zealand composers to record some of their original compositions. Mandrill was one of the leading recording studios in New Zealand at the time. Composers are always complaining that no one will play or record their music, yet I got only one positive response. Very strange I thought. That was in the 80's when home recording studios were very much in their infancy and composers wanted to have their music recorded.

I do have my own thoughts as to the lack of positive responses. There is a certain caution, criticism and embarrassment about listening to your own music on a recording. I am always super critical of my own recordings, sometimes to their detriment. The music could always be different, changes could be made, but difference does not necessarily mean better and most listeners would not identify the difference.

I guess if your music is never played or recorded, it cannot be criticised or damned. Sometimes composers live too close to their music.



Auckland Symphony Orchestra



Gary Daverne CNZM

Awarded the honorary position of

**Music Director
Emeritus**

Of the Auckland Symphony Orchestra

Signed: 

Date: 21 March 2011



Interestingly enough, my first record release, in the late 1950's, was on the Zodiac record label, while I was a member of the rock group Red Hewitt and the Buccaneers. Yes, I was a rockin' piano, saxophone playing, Buccaneer and we had several hit records.

A few years later I established my own record label, Viscount, a name that I have continued to use for my music production and publishing company throughout my music years. When I collaborated with Zodiac Records on some joint venture projects, we used a Zodiac/Viscount label.

I wonder if this early association with Zodiac Records had any significant influence in my interest in Astrology. I know that my first introduction to this science was not until ten years later in the very early 1970's.

While in Europe young people I met would generally ask me three questions on first meeting. Name, do you do drugs and what is your star sign? If your star sign was compatible with theirs, then a friendship could and frequently did eventuate. This intrigued me enough to do a little research of my own and from there the interest grew.

I actually wrote a short children's musical called *Zodiac*, while I was Composer in Schools (more about that later) and in my original and first Rock Musical – *Hi Ya Messiah*, I cast twelve girls, one for each star sign. Were there not twelve disciples?

Crystals have also always played an important part of my life. I like having them around me and my birthstone is amethyst. Guess what my favourite colour is? Yes, purple, the colour of amethyst and I loved this colour a long time before I ever got involved with crystals. I even drove a purple sports car.



How many of us can really remember our young childhood years?

I can remember one instance when I was three years old and I nearly drowned myself. Imagine: midmorning and Mum with three-year-old Gary are visiting the local shops. Gary is on his tricycle. Mum goes into the butcher's shop and leaves Gary outside to explore the large manhole filled with muddy water in the footpath.

Without fear, up to the surrounding protective ropes I pedal, peer over and head first I topple in, with my legs and tricycle caught in the ropes and my sun hat bobbing up and down in the muddy water. People standing by pulled me out. I didn't know anything about drowning so I thought it was all quite funny. My mother had other views. I can remember that I used to wear shirts with buttons on them to hold up my shorts and in those days the butchers used to wrap our meat in white paper and tie it with string. On that day I pedalled home with my pants held up with butcher's string and a damp sun hat on my head.

When I was six years old I remember learning to tap dance, probably because my female cousin one year my senior, from down the road, was learning ballet. I don't think I excelled at dance. I cannot recall winning anything or seeing certificates of success or achievement in my name (it was a sissy thing to do, to dance anyway). I do, however remember dressing up as a cowboy and singing and tapping to "I'm an old cowhand from the Rio Grande". I once saw a photo of me with both my front teeth missing, to prove it.

Most of the remaining and in between years are hazy or a blank, where I was just doing and dreaming about the boyish things one did, playing cowboys and Indians, pirates, being a fireman, or belonging to a circus. I guess this free reign of my imagination became evident in later life as a composer and musical director.

There was one time when I was quite young, I told my mother I was running away from home, probably to join the circus. She said, "That's all right, Dear" and helped me pack some things



A Younger Gary with Clarinet

together. Just as I was about to leave home it started to rain quite heavily. I can remember saying, "Oh, it's started raining. I think I will go tomorrow morning when it's fine!" Amazing what a good night's sleep in your own warm, secure bed can do to change your thought patterns.

I know that this has nothing to do with my musical career as a composer or conductor. Perhaps some psychologist could interpret something in my early childhood years, but the next major event in my life when I was only eleven years of age, changed the whole direction my life was to take. My destiny was set even though I was unaware of what was to come.

I contracted poliomyelitis.

Like most young boys in New Zealand I was interested in sport. While batting in a game of cricket, the ball glanced off my bat and struck me on the head in the temple region. Helmets were not a consideration in those days. I was admitted to hospital, originally with suspected meningitis, but after extensive tests, it was concluded that I had Polio. No one was ever sure of how or where from. The polio epidemic had been a few years earlier, but for me this resulted in staying in isolation, at Auckland Hospital, for six weeks. This is a lifetime for an eleven year old, not being able to see family and friends and confined to bed. This was February and I was not allowed to return to school until the following February.

My school education was done by Correspondence School. Worse though, was that I was not allowed to take part in any form of physical activity or sport for five years. I was not even allowed to ride a bicycle. However, when I was fourteen I was cleared to pursue archery and became a junior archery champion. When I was sixteen, I was permitted to play rugby and compete in athletics, both of which I played to a high level. I enjoyed rugby up to senior level, until I was in my early thirties, then changing to hockey, (less physical) playing competitive hockey until I was in my early 50's.

So how did polio change my life?

As I was not allowed to do any physical activity, I learnt the piano for a year. I was twelve years of age and I hated it. I stopped learning the piano, never to take up the instrument again seriously until I was in my early twenties. One of the few regrets in my life and a big one at that was that I never persevered with the piano in those early years. How was I ever to know that I was to become top line jazz and rock 'n' roll pianist in later years?

I also hated Grammar School. Because I was not allowed to do physical education and play sports I felt I was a misfit, different from the other boys in my class.

The school band practised in class time so in my first year at Grammar School, I joined the band, learning to play the euphonium. I could already read music and found playing this instrument quite easy. In my second year at Grammar, I studied the clarinet, because the school orchestra also rehearsed in school time. I was told that because of different lip and mouth formation and technique (technical word – embouchure), I was not allowed to play both woodwind and brass, so I gave up the euphonium and stayed in the brass band playing percussion, becoming quite a competent all round percussionist, later to spend several years playing in professional orchestras.

The clarinet and the saxophone became my major musical instruments. I was also concentrating on sports and athletics.

You guessed it! My school studies suffered and I failed my School Certificate, so I spent two years in the 5th Form. I did take Music as a subject for School Certificate, along with Bookkeeping.

It was then that I wrote my first song “The Robbers Song”, for a school play.

I seem to remember the performance was so dreadful and the song unrecognisable, I destroyed the manuscript in disgust.

Once again, how was I to know, that fifteen years later I would venture into the world of musical composition? My Father told me I had to be an accountant. So yes! I went to Auckland University, studied accountancy, worked in an accountant's office for a time and also studied music, finally attending Teacher's Training College, to become a qualified schoolteacher.

After a few years of teaching, like many young New Zealanders, I went to England on my big OE (Overseas Experience).

While teaching in London, I achieved my Trinity College Fellowship in musical composition, with an orchestral work called *Concert Overture: Highbury Grove*. Highbury Grove was the name of the comprehensive boys' school in northeast London where I taught Commerce for five years in the late 60's.

Trinity College did not have an orchestra but the London Royal Academy of Music did and a fine orchestra it was. I made a direct approach to the conductor and somehow I managed to persuade him to perform my *Concert Overture: Highbury Grove*. Perhaps it was my strange accent or maybe my sheer blaséness and arrogance, but a rehearsal date was set for two months' time. I even managed to talk them into recording the work for me.

Now, in the meantime, I went to New Haven in America to visit a friend whom I had worked with when I first came to London. He had since married an American girl. One night we were playing around with a Ouija board. It was nothing too serious, all rather light and flippant. I had never been involved with spiritualism or talking to spirits. It was all fun and a lot of laughter. We were called to supper and I asked the board if we could go and partake. Surprisingly, the board said "No!"

"Why?" I asked.

The board spelt out, "I have much to tell you about Gary and his music."

It then proceeded to tell me about future music I would compose, much of which has come true, but nothing as I can recall about conducting.

Finally, I asked the board about *Concert Overture: Highbury Grove*. The work I had composed for my Fellowship and for which I had arranged a performance.

“Will it be performed?”

The board spelt out, “No! It is not finished.”

This came somewhat as a shock.

“Of course it is finished,” I protested.

But the board kept repeating, “No! It is not finished. It is not finished.”

No matter how much I protested and tried to explain that it was completed, the board kept repeating, “It is not finished.” “It is not finished.”

Now, I knew it was finished. I had submitted a good final score of *Highbury Grove* to Trinity College and my Fellowship had been awarded.

Sure, the individual orchestral parts had not been copied from the score as yet for the orchestra players, but

“Stop!”

It was not finished. It was not in a format that could be played by an orchestra.

On my return to London, with the aid of a musical associate, with whom I was teaching, I immediately set about copying out the orchestral parts. He and I copied hard and long, finishing only one week out from the rehearsal date.

Highbury Grove was performed and it was recorded.

The Ouija board was a warning, a warning that changed my whole life. I would not have physically been able to copy all the parts in time for the rehearsal date. I was not experienced in part copying and did not realise the amount of time needed. Computers and photocopiers were in their infancy. Without the parts, there would be no orchestra playing my composition and therefore no recording of it made for me. With no recording to take back to New Zealand to play to Television New Zealand as an audition tape, there would have been no television arranging, conducting and production work.

It was Television New Zealand that recommended me as an arranger and musical director for *Man of Sorrows*, which led on to my conducting musical theatre, the Waitangi Day Celebrations and it was television producers that introduced the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra to me, which was to be another major factor in my musical path.

No Television, no accordions, no symphony orchestras and probably no composing, arranging or conducting. The Ouija board: fate or coincidence?

Concert Overture: Highbury Grove was the first piece of orchestral music that I wrote; written for an exam and composed while I was teaching. It was certainly not to be my last orchestral composition.

I always remember at the first rehearsal of the premiere in London, the French horn player made a mistake in a solo passage. The conductor was furious and threw his baton on the floor, stopped the orchestra, reprimanded the player and told her that this was a “Bloody waste of time. Get it right,” and then continued. I thought to myself, “If ever I am a conductor I will never treat my players with that sort of discourtesy.” I hope I never did, although many times I would get frustrated and have been know to pass the odd comment, but never thrown my baton at anyone.

Highbury Grove is not one of my favourite compositions and I have only ever conducted it once in concert, although it has been recorded a further two times and is featured on my first orchestral C.D. release, *Youth of Auckland - New Zealand Orchestral Music Composed by Gary Daverne*. (See discography).

Sadly over the years, I lost contact with the American family even though I have tried to locate them when visiting Connecticut.

They were never to know the influence of that ‘evening with the Ouija board.’



VICTORIA & ALBERT
PRODUCTIONS PRESENT



Design by Michael Bentley.

MUSIC BY
ENZO TOPPANO.

LYRICS BY
PEGGY MORTIMER
&
LORRAE DESMOND.

ACT 1

(Scene 1)

Man of Sorrows

It was during 1972, while I was working for TV as a musical arranger, I was asked, at the recommendation of TVNZ, if I would arrange the music for a pit orchestra and be the musical director/conductor for the Rock Musical *Man of Sorrows*.

Man of Sorrows was an Australian Christian Rock Musical (composed in 1969 a few years ahead of Andrew Lloyd Webber's, *Jesus Christ Superstar*) by Enzo Topano and based on the life of Jesus. *Man of Sorrows*, which incorporated many aspects of rock music into opera, was having a very successful season in a church hall in Melbourne, Australia, using a small cast accompanied by a small rhythm combo.

In a moment of madness I said, “yes” to the musical director/arranger offer, as if I wasn't busy enough! I don't think anyone else wanted the job, because of the short time frame to write and arrange the music. This was in fact to be a turning point in my musical career and it was from this production that the initial idea of “From the Podium” originated and prompted me to collect and write down ‘happenings’ as I call then, observed while conducting.

Apart from school orchestras and choirs I had never conducted anything major in my life. I was given a four-week time frame before opening night and I had a very basic piano part – and I mean basic - to work from. With some songs there were only melody lines and words with chord symbols. In those days we did not have the luxury of synthesizers or computers, the best I could manage was on an electric piano and an organ. I decided to write for a four-piece rhythm section of piano, bass, guitar and

drums, with three saxophones, two trumpets and one trombone. It also meant arranging parts for a large chorus.

Due to advances in technology, this was also a time for experimenting with electronics and amplification. We experimented with sound effects and reverberations. For example, in the production, with the aid of a joystick and carefully placed speakers, we could circulate amplified sound around the theatre.

The stage cast I was working with came from varying theatrical backgrounds including grand opera, but for many of them, this was a first - to be involved in a major stage production, with such a large cast, at a professional level, performed in Auckland's number one theatre. Some had played in pop bands, but most did not understand microphone techniques. This was a learning curve for us all, myself included. It was also a first for me as a musical director in musical theatre.

The schedule went something like this:

Week One: I write Act One, along with holding auditions for the show. I employed a full time copyist. A copyist is a person who writes out, in ink, or today on computer, the individual parts for the musicians and singers, from the arranger's full score, usually written in pencil and often in abbreviated form.

Week Two: Act One is rehearsed (finding all my errors), while I arrange Act Two.

Week Three: Act Two is rehearsed while I correct Act One.

Week Four: Rehearsals are full on with full cast and orchestra. Opening night is not far away. There is anxiety, excitement, frustrations and frayed tempers but an amazing atmosphere and feeling of achievement was being generated amongst the cast and production crew. We are all on the same side and intend to win.

Looking back on this, it was a seemingly impossible undertaking, however, I was young and stupid and we did it. Would I do it

again? Then, yes of course and I would. Now? Maybe, being older but not sure about the wiser bit.

I wrote in pencil and even these days it is still quicker for me to write in pencil than use a computer. Computers have a nasty habit of changing notes, making things disappear and crashing, causing you to lose material. When I write a note on paper in pencil, it stays there until I erase it. Also I can spread many pages of music across the table that I am working on, in my case the lid of the grand piano and I can see at a glance what I have written back on page two or three while I am working on, say, page ten. It is difficult, frustrating and time consuming scrolling through on a computer and you can lose your line of thought and creative ideas.

Of course computers have their place and value in music writing and today I certainly use them extensively.

Remember also, that in the days *Man of Sorrows*, photocopiers were not what they are today.

Prior to *Man of Sorrows*, my first conducting experiences were with local school choirs, orchestras and school music festivals. These festivals would involve many schools all combining for a big concert. These festivals were always popular and highly successful.

Even in those early years, I was thinking outside of the square. I can remember the many problems of part-singing with school choirs. I overcame this by giving each school only one part of the total piece. This part may have been the melody, a harmony or a descant part. The individual school choir conductors would rehearse their own choirs separately and when I brought them together, all knowing their parts well, they would sing with so much confidence and enthusiasm. The combined sound was unbelievable and exciting.

But *Man of Sorrows* was my first real, professional, conducting gig and in Auckland's top theatre at the time, His Majesty's

Theatre and my first introduction to the world of musical theatre. I had started at the top. There was no preparatory learning by doing, conducting amateur light opera productions, in school or church halls. It was straight in at the top for me.

Sadly, in many people's eyes, His Majesty's Theatre was demolished in 1988, in the name of progress of course. Personally, I have other feelings about it as a theatre, having worked a long season there, with *Man of Sorrows* and I did get to conduct other musicals in this theatre at later dates.

His Majesty's Theatre had a mystique and antique character about it. It was tucked away at the back of an arcade and accessed by narrow lanes in Auckland's inner city. To sit in the 'Gods' was exciting because of its steepness and the feeling that you might be falling into the orchestra pit.

The dressing rooms were inadequate as was the stage access for the performers. The stage was raked (sloped) which had its own difficulties, especially for dancers and the placing of props. There were pillars in front of some seats, blocking the audience's view and if you sat in rows three and four of the circle, you had the handrail in your sight line with the stage.

The narrow lanes were a major problem for access. They were originally designed for pedestrians and small carts, not for modern transport and modern productions. Getting large, heavy production equipment, sets and scenery to the stage door and inside was a real challenge and let us not forget the permanent tenants of the theatre, the rats.

In spite of its drawbacks, there was a certain amount of old world charm about His Majesty's Theatre, the 'Maj' as we used to affectionately call it. You could be stepping into another world, as you walked up the quaint, tiled and ornamented His Majesty's Arcade. There was something exotic and mystic for me about this arcade that led to the theatre. People would dress up in their best attire to attend a performance, sometimes queuing for hours

to buy tickets to see a show. Parking cars never seemed to be a problem, perhaps because in those days, few people owned a car.

I went to my first show, *The Mikado*, at His Majesty's. I was eleven years of age.

So it was here, conducting *Man of Sorrows*, where I first started to collect 'happenings', observed from the podium.

There were some thirty performances of *Man of Sorrows* and after the first half dozen; it was very easy for me as a conductor and the musicians, to become quite relaxed about the show.

In one section of *Man of Sorrows* the bass guitar plays a repetitive two bar solo, as Judas jumps around and does his thing on stage. It was a part that carried considerable dramatic impact, totally absorbing. During one performance, the pianist leant over and whispered to me, "the bass is playing in the wrong key". Yes, he himself was so engrossed in the captivating performance on stage that he was playing on the wrong strings. Another quick whisper and a quick key change. And would the audience know? Forget it! This was a case of the orchestra saving the conductor and the show. I too was totally involved in the stage performance and completely unaware of the bass player's error.

I don't want to think about how interesting it would have sounded when the full band came in, playing in another key and the vocalist trying to sing in a completely different key.

There was the scene when Jesus enters the temple and expels the moneylenders by turning over the tables with the contents flying everywhere. One of the brass plates skimmed across the stage like a frisbee and into the orchestra pit, demolishing a music stand and light. I could have had a decapitated saxophone player.

We had quite a large cast, many newcomers to the musical theatre and rock music. The cast included several big strong Maori boys. Some nights when Jesus was walking and shaking hands in the crowd scene, they would not let go of his hand and just kept

smiling and hanging on. Or they could put sticky toffee in their hands.

Of course, I knew only the obvious ‘goings on’ like towards the end of the show, after the crucifixion, when Jesus goes outside of the theatre and re-enters by the rear door and walks through the audience, white robes flowing, for the resurrection scene. One night he was locked out. A member of the audience heard him banging and shouting on the door and let him in. No one ever admitted to this lockout.

There was the time when one of the leads sang verse one, twice (I never noticed,) or the time I entered the pit to conduct a performance, paused at the podium and gasped. No conductor’s score! I had left it in the car. A frantic exit, hasty reappearance and the Overture began – only five minutes late starting.

One of the leading principals informed me, “I don’t do curtain calls.”

A curtain call is where the soloists and/or cast come back on stage to receive flowers, acknowledge audience applause, accolades, the directors, orchestra, back stage crew and perhaps present an encore.

After this show the audience were heard to be saying, “Did you notice that [so and so] was not on stage at the end in the curtain calls? I wonder why?” The audience were talking about him and not about the performance in general.

Now was this coincidental, clever or contrived?

Man of Sorrows was in the 1970’s the time of hippies, flower power, protests, alternative clothing, in fact, alternative everything and long hair.

I was in my early thirties, with shoulder length hair that had started to thin on top. No, I don’t think I was a hippie and I didn’t have a beard in those days, like I’ve had now for the past thirty years.

At the technical dress rehearsal of *Man of Sorrows* (in the theatre) it was pointed out to me that the follow spot was reflecting off my little shining, bald plate and was somewhat distracting. They suggested perhaps painting words or drawings on my head. Another embarrassing situation! So every performance night I would sit in the makeup room with the cast as they had their faces painted and I had my top blackened out. These days I would need a wig.

Now, remember, this was my first major conducting experience and when the unexpected happens, it is a test, a real test. Perhaps that is why I was losing my hair.

During the 'Last Supper' scene, a symbolic table was lowered from the heights above the stage and the twelve disciples stand around it and sing a really beautiful song. One night, the 'table thing' did not happen. It got stuck in mid air. Without missing a beat, the twelve continued as the table was suspended above them.

The cast was always playing jokes. They told the 'blind man' one night that Jesus was coming in from the other side of the stage. So while the whole cast is facing stage right, the blind man is standing high at the back of the set singing, "I can see, I can see", while facing stage left.

Opera and especially operatic sopranos has never been my number one choice of music, although I have worked with some wonderful voices.

Our *Man of Sorrows* diva was no exception. This was a challenge in itself, working with an experienced and talented opera soprano diva, showing her and guiding her through the ways of the rock music world and microphone use. Really, she did not need any amplification, with a voice so powerful, much to the astonishment of the chorus. She loved her role in the musical as Mary, the Mother of Jesus and we all had fun. They really were fun times. It was stressful and hard work at times, but still fun and with no regrets. Our diva always used to amuse us because she counted

the “green” people in the audience. The seats were green so she could tell us how many empty seats there were in the theatre and there were never very many.

I met up with one of the chorus girls some thirty-five years later, while she and her husband, who had also been to the show, were visiting Auckland. We were all recalling the mischief, fun and heartache days of *Man of Sorrows*. It was only then did she tell me about how scared she was of me during the show.

Apparently, she sang *Edelweiss* from *Sound of Music* for her singing audition. I hate it when singers try to sing this song (and also *Summertime* for that matter) at an audition. She said I stopped her, told her to relax, stop shaking, open her mouth and sing as if she meant it and convince me that she wanted to get in this show. She must have passed the audition because she sang in the show, where she met up and married one of the twelve disciples.

Performers and orchestras expect two things from their musical directors or conductors.

One, that they know their music and two that they make their intentions clear. With *Man of Sorrows* I certainly knew the music thoroughly. I wrote and arranged it. But as for the conducting skills, hey, they were initially sadly lacking and I am sure my inexperience showed. This was my first real conducting adventure. I learned quickly. I had to. There were some very experienced musicians playing in the orchestra for me, as were there some very fine and experienced actors in the cast. They were never slow in offering their ‘friendly’ advice.

The Director was one of the best and also a great innovative choreographer. He could say to me, in passing, “I need an extra eight bars of music here” or “cut that intro.” He never appeared to take notes, but I soon learned that he had a great memory, especially when after a few days he would say, “And where are those extra eight bars?” or “Didn’t I chop that intro?”

He was also a chain smoker and could throw tantrums better than the best. He terrified the hell out of some of the cast. Hiding his cigarettes did not always help the cause!

A decision was made to take *Man of Sorrows* 'on the road' and then came my first encounter with UNIONISM.

What an opportunity to take this show to other towns, not only the experience for the cast, as many of them were young and this was their first introduction to musical theatre, but to tour the country, have fun and take this wonderful musical to a wider audience. People from out of Auckland deserved the right to experience *Man of Sorrows*.

The Actor's Equity Union stepped in and imposed unrealistic conditions and restrictions that were impossible to meet with such a large cast. The producers, directors, musicians and total cast all wanted to tour under the agreement that management had negotiated with them. The union said no, (not that many belonged to the union) destroying a dream and experience of a lifetime for many young people. A sad decision and one not completely thought through by Actor's Equity.

If we had gone ahead with the tour, the repercussions from associated unions would have been enormous.

Man of Sorrows broke all box office records for the time and because of popular demand there were several extensions of the initial performance season. The show had to finish because we ran into Christmas and further extensions were not possible.

The show was shelved for two years and resurrected for a short season in the Auckland Town Hall, with some of the original cast. I was again musical director but this production, with a different director and choreographer and in a Town hall and not a theatre, did not produce the same excitement, atmosphere and success as the initial production. A disappointment I feel to the ones who had fond memories of the earlier production.

Amplification and technology had developed a little by then. How can I ever forget, in one performance, when Jesus (who was played by my brother, Wayne, this time) turned to the audience after a successful number and said, “You want that again? One more time! One, two, three, four.” Were we ready? Of course not, but we did catch him up.

To the best of my knowledge *Man of Sorrows* has never been performed again, certainly not as my musical arrangement. Many times I have been asked over the years, why not revisit *Man of Sorrows* again? Maybe. One day.

It remains only a memory for many people, a wonderful memory.



In the orchestra of *Man of Sorrows* I had one English gentleman who had recently arrived from the UK. He didn't understand the New Zealand way of doing things, and certainly not mine. We had never met. I hired him on recommendation as a baritone saxophone player.

He rang the musicians union telling them he wanted travelling money. The union rang me with his demands. This was just what I needed with all the pressure I was under at the time writing the music, auditions and rehearsals. So, I told the union representative:

“Well he's fired then.”

“You can't do that.”

“I can and I have. I am paying above award wages. I don't need this nonsense,” and hung up.

The show hadn't even started. The orchestra had not even got together for a first rehearsal.

The player rang me and apologised for his lack of understanding and actions. My response and reply was simple, “See you at the first band rehearsal”. He turned out to be a very fine player and we became good friends.

During my television days, it was common knowledge amongst the musicians that I was a non-unionist. No one ever asked me why I was not a member or to actually join. I was never even asked about my feelings or thoughts on the matter. In recording sessions, comments would come over the microphones from some of the musicians like: “Daverne’s got a lot of arrangements this week for a non unionist,” or “Do you think we should play this arrangement of his?” I must point out that all the musicians did not share this antagonism, just a handful of ‘stirrers’.

The studio-working environment became quite uncomfortable and got to a stage where Television New Zealand fired the whole studio orchestra. These were busy times and this was the livelihood for many of the musicians. It was regular weekly recording session work for the one-hour popular TV music programme that screened every week for fifty weeks of the year. Plus there were all the TV extras and ‘one offs.’

All music arrangers were called to a meeting. We were told the orchestra was not being re-employed and that recording sessions would be held somewhere else and not to ask where, or even speculate because we would not be told. This way we could not lie. “You are arrangers so get on with the job of arranging and you will be busy, very busy.” Busy we were. We worked our little butts off.

As the weeks rolled by the volume of music arranged and copied was way above the average. Of course, we all speculated as to where it was being recorded but no one knew for certain. The Auckland musicians were not happy with the situation and some, I am sure, were being penalised by the attitude and pressure by others. Eventually, after many weeks, the Auckland players mellowed and were grateful to be reinstated.

What they didn't understand was I didn't need to be a union member. I was an arranger and conductor, not a playing musician and did not come under the union jurisdiction. Also I engaged musicians for my shows and recording sessions. Being an employee and employer at the same time, it is difficult to be in a union.

A similar situation about my non-union membership arose a few years later when I was doing more studio orchestra conducting and production for television. My producer had a quiet word with me suggesting, "Why don't you surreptitiously join the union?"

So I did.

The union office secretary issued me my card without telling anyone.

After a few more weeks, the musician union agitator was on a roll – or so he thought.

I photocopied my union card (with name, number and date) and wrote underneath it, "I hear there is a nasty rumour going around. Love and kisses, Gary" and I mailed it to him. Not one word was spoken after that and I never renewed my union membership.

If the clarinet were in concert pitch (in C), the fingers would be very close together and make it difficult and uncomfortable to play. Space the fingers, lengthen the instrument and the pitch lowers. *Bb* trumpets have longer tubing than C trumpets and are not as bright sounding.

Alto and Baritone saxophones, some smaller clarinets, soprano cornets and tenor horns are in *Eb*. That means when they play C it sounds *Eb*. To achieve the correct sounding notes, the notes must be written (transposed) accordingly.

Modern French horns are generally in F and transposition of music parts goes with being a horn player, this being the nature

and build of the instrument. Early instruments did not have valves to change the notes, and were pitched in different keys, depending on the length of tubing. The players would change the key of the instrument, in performance, by changing different length shanks or tubing.

When the horn player puts his hand inside the bell of the horn, it is called ‘stopping’ the note. It makes the note softer with a completely different tone colour, but it also lowers the pitch of the note by a semitone. This means the player must read the note (transpose it) a semitone higher.

The opening few bars to the *Children’s Overture* by British composer, Roger Quilter, have four solo ‘stopped’ horn notes. You can imagine what happens when the horn player forgets to transpose those four notes or does it deliberately.

Oh yes, it did happen to me, but only in a rehearsal. Keep on side with the horn players and for a conductor, you can never afford to argue with the trombones or the percussion section when it comes to tempo. They can become a law unto themselves, generally not intentionally, but having said that, you stay on side with them also. If in concert, they set the tempo, then you must follow them.

I have had the good fortune of enjoying some fine young instrumentalists in my youth orchestras.

One I can remember while I was a college music teacher was this thirteen year-old flautist asking me to accompany her on piano for the school talent competition. She was playing one of the fast movements from the Mozart Flute Concerto.

Now remember, I am an accomplished rock ‘n’ roll/pop/jazz pianist, but my classical piano and accompanying left a little bit to be desired.

After I had struggled through the Finale movement, I asked her how it was. She replied “Fine, but can we play it at twice the speed!” At this point I arranged another pianist to accompany her.

Inevitably she went overseas and pursued a highly successful career.



My brother Wayne (and there were only the two of us) is a few years younger than me, a talented actor with wonderful stage presence. He was also blessed with a beautiful warm tenor voice and was nearby when good looks were handed out. He was also a very fine and tasteful drummer. Wayne not only excelled in musical theatre but also in the pop world. I produced many records with his band the Sierras and we did have a hit single, *The Crying Game*.

In London, for nearly two years, three nights a week, we played the pub scene together in a trio, with a bass player and me on piano, as a resident pub group.

Wayne featured in both productions of *Man of Sorrows* and in the musical theatre world he played many lead roles, including that of Tony in *West Side Story* on two different occasions, one of which I was fortunate and privileged enough to be musical director. I always said that after *West Side Story* I could conduct anything. It was wonderful music and particularly challenging. I was very thankful for my jazz background. I must admit though, that in recent years, some film scores have proved a challenge with their time and tempo changes, along with some interesting rhythmical patterns.

In the early years, on our return from the UK, Wayne and I would do restaurant and cabaret duos with me accompanying brother on the piano. These were the years before conducting was ever a consideration.



Man of Sorrows with brother Wayne

One of our little restaurant acts was for Wayne to walk up to a dinner table and borrow the Saturday evening late sports/newspaper (The 8 O'clock) from one of the restaurant guests. It was not uncommon in the 70's for people to take the sports newspaper with them to restaurants. I would then play *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, while Wayne simulated 'soft shoe shuffle' by tearing the newspaper pages into strips. The audience loved it, especially when he returned the newspaper, with thanks, to the table he borrowed it from, as a heap of torn strips of newspaper.

If a newspaper were not available he would sometimes simulate a similar effect by clicking his teeth together over the microphone. This did not do his teeth any favours.

I remember the first time he sang with my orchestra in a programme of music from *Broadway* in the then new Aotea Centre, in Auckland, to a capacity audience of around 2000 people. Wayne was a nervous mess at the start of the concert. I left him chain-smoking in his dressing room, to go to the podium. I knew he would be all right when it was time for him to sing and true to form he walked on stage with a wide smile, hand gestures and no obvious nerves. Experience tells.

His opening number was the *Impossible Dream* from the *Man of La Mancha*, my arrangement with a two-count flourish of violins and a suspended cymbal roll for the introduction. Wayne entered from the 'cello' side. I faced him to give him confidence, and count in with my back to the strings. The only one who could see my count in was the drummer. Well, at least we got the cymbal roll!

From time to time I dragged my brother out of retirement to sing with my orchestra when I was performing music from *Stage and Screen* and he never seemed to 'lose it.' He was always in top form, a delight and fun to work with. Believe me, it is very special to have the privilege of conducting your brother, who is a top entertainer and soloist in his own right.

Thank you Brother, for those wonderful years together in the music scene.



ACT 1 (Scene 2)

Musical Theatre

Most conductors seem to start their careers in musical theatre, be it opera, ballet or musicals. I was no exception. The experience of working with a top stage director, choreographer and talented, innovative backstage technical people and musicians on *Man of Sorrows*, was to direct me almost immediately into the mature world of musical theatre, both as a conductor and composer.

In the year following *Man of Sorrows* (1972), I composed my own rock musical, the first of a few. *Hi Ya Messiah* was born to a libretto by American, Ed Justin, of Screen Gems notoriety.

Having been Musical Director for *West Side Story* (1974) and *Hello Dolly* (1975), I had developed a good relationship with Auckland's North Shore Operatic Society who agreed to the use of their club rooms to 'workshop' my new rock musical before its planned production.

As the director for *Man of Sorrows* was not available, several other would be directors were auditioned and an energetic young man and choreographer were chosen. I would be Musical Director.

The story, briefly, tells of a long haired university dropout, conceived out of wedlock by wealthy parents, who send him a weekly cheque, not knowing that their 'Junior' is mentoring and 'saving' twelve young women (his disciples) by being their Messiah. Dissensions start within the harem and then Judith, the unlucky thirteenth, arrives. She is a "women's libber", a lesbian and a judo black belt. Judith is the Judas of the story and kicks

Junior out of the pad literally. She takes over his role to liberate the twelve girls and sends him home packing to his parents where the maid is waiting for him.

My brother Wayne, fresh out of *West Side Story*, was cast in the lead role as the long haired messianic figure that lived with the twelve 'chicks'. Lucky him.

This was a high-energy show. All the girls had to be good dancers as well as singers. The show was amplified and, as commercial synthesizers had not yet evolved, I made effective use of the electric piano and organ, with electric guitars (the rhythm section coming direct from *Man of Sorrows*). Along with two trumpets and a trombone in this offstage band, I also used an amplified, offstage four piece female vocal group, working on microphone with the band under my baton, to supplement the on-stage chorus. I used this amplified, offstage vocal group concept effectively in many later musical theatre performances. It was an interesting experience working with a small cast of only seventeen, but fifteen of them being young women.

One of the scenes involved a nightly ritual, modelled on a communion ceremony, in which each of the girls was given a contraceptive pill by their Messiah to the accompaniment of a song titled *Popping the Pill*. At that time the contraceptive pill was a relatively new development and the target of controversy by conservative groups. The parallels with Jesus Christ coupled with the depiction of oral contraception that challenged the traditional view of a celibate Saviour and the reference to lesbianism, resulted in strong protests on the show's opening night. Crowds gathered outside the theatre, shouting at patrons and waving banners with slogans such as 'God do not forgive them for they know what they do!'

The controversy provided the show with considerable publicity and it contained a sufficient variety of music, drama and humour to appeal to a broad audience.

Also the controversial subject matter, coupled with the still innovative rock musical genre, made it difficult for me to obtain sponsorship, so I decided to underwrite the show myself. I begged, borrowed, used contacts and called in favours. The cast was an amateur group and brother Wayne, a printer, supplied the posters, programmes and other publicity material.

The show had a long run, with large enthusiastic audiences and was a musical success, if not financially. There were never any 'moments of madness' that I can remember, only 'moments of magic'. A repeat production has never occurred, although I have quite often thought and talked about it. Several songs were recorded by the cast and released on a 45EP. I re-released a re-mastered digital version of the songs on a compilation CD, *The Other Side*, Viscount VISC107 in 2011.

For me as the composer/musical director, it was a further milestone on the road of musical accomplishments. Soon after *Hi Ya Messiah*, I composed and directed the music to *Peter*, a modern rock version of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* story, to a libretto by Alan de Malmanche. Alan had previously stage directed *West Side Story* that brother Wayne and I had been involved with and he directed *Peter*. Nothing too memorable about this show for me, except motorbikes on stage and some great lead singers and actors from television. It only ever received the one production, which had a reasonably successful season. Many new talents did emerge and went on to greater musical theatre adventures.



Although not aware of it at the time, the experience I gained in those early years of musical theatre was invaluable for my future musical career. Consequently I say now, a big thank you to all those amateur operatic societies that had faith in my musical abilities and direction in those early years.

Performances of these musicals, had varying degrees of success, both artistically and financially, but they were always presented

with enthusiasm and energy, with everyone making their best effort. Of course there were the tense, argumentative moments, the times when nothing seemed to be going right, differences of ideas and opinions, but the cast generally were fun and loving, warm people, with many, many moments of good humour and laughter, along with the stress levels. This is why, I guess, we kept coming back to do the next show. It certainly was not for the money, but it enabled people to leave the real world for a period of time and venture into the world of fantasy. That's 'show business' as they say.

In one production, *Hello Dolly*, there was a catwalk around the outside of the orchestra pit and the girls would dance around swirling their full dresses. This would cause a draft and send the sheet music flying from the orchestra music stands. As the show progressed, the girls became braver and would drape their dresses over the male players' heads. A blast of cold water from a water pistol up between the legs put a stop to that.

In the same show, I found out, that in the ballroom scene, the waiter was serving real wine to the cast on stage. I was not angry about the real wine but more the fact I was not offered any. After a little complaining on my part, in the next performance the waiter leaned over into the pit and said "Maestro, for you." I thanked him, took a sip and shared it around the small pit orchestra I was using. Quite unemotionally, without any reaction, each player took a sip and poker faced, passed the wine glass on. Watching intently, cast members became increasingly disappointed at the complete lack of reaction - to a glass that had been filled with salt water.

Although never encouraged, tricks were often played on one other. I did, however, emphasise the danger of and perhaps the inappropriateness of, "in house" jokes in front of the audience. I guess I was as guilty as the rest for having fun or perhaps misbehaving. One of my philosophies is that music must be fun. Take it seriously but not too seriously and keep it at a professional level.

There was one terrible musical called *Viva Mexico* I was conducting, back in 1977. A few well-known tunes are possibly the only good thing I could say about it. For me it was a total bore. I spent most of the performance in the pit, as instructed by the director, wearing a Mexican sombrero, a poncho and acting to look as if it was siesta time.

There was a scene where the leading lady comes on stage with a group of chorus girls carrying a park bench. She is to sing solo, with the girls backing her, accompanied only by an on stage guitarist. The guitar gently strums away while the girls place the bench and when they are settled and ready to sing, they look to me for direction and the starting cue.

On one particular performance when I lifted my head from the slumber position I was wearing a full facial mask. What the ensemble on stage saw, was a gorilla, wearing a sombrero, a poncho and waving his hands at them. The panicked look on the girls' faces was worth a treat, watching them trying to keep straight faces and sing instead of laughing. The guitarist? Well he just turned his back on me, cracked up laughing and continued playing. Naughty of me I know, but the show needed something to lighten it and help it along, with something to talk about afterwards.

The next night saw an on-stage retaliation in an equally boring, badly scripted scene. The bandit chief is waving his pistol around and shouting lines like, "I hate Americanos." He suddenly spun around, looked at me and shouted, "And I hate Musical Directors", pointed his pistol directly at me and fired. It was loaded with blanks and the report was loud. I near 'shat' myself and fell off my chair. To look down the barrel of a gun and it goes off! That shut me up for a while. Naughty again, but I guess I deserved it.

There was another scene in the same show where two of the male lead gendarmes sing a comedy duet. While the pair clowned around on stage the band played a two-bar vamp – on the understanding that when the gendarmes were ready with the next stage they would give me a quick nod and away we go into the song. Well, as their confidence grew, the clowning around became longer and longer each night, as did the length of the

vamp. So one night, after another very long vamp, when I got the nod, I smiled and nodded back. The vamp continued. The nods became more pronounced and my grin became increasingly wider. After many too-ing and fro-ing with lots of big cheesy grins from me, our two noble heroes became quite uneasy for what seemed an eternity, although it was not long in reality. They shuffled and looking quite concerned, while I had the vamp stuck in the groove. Finally I put them out of their misery. These two pulled their horns in after that – for a while anyway.

Interestingly enough, there was no feedback that I was aware of, from the audience, noticing any of these little ‘naughty’ things. Perhaps they were all having a siesta as well.

There was one instance in a performance of a children’s pantomime, at His Majesty’s Theatre, where I was conducting the show from the piano and organ. I was completely thrown, when the whole children’s cast turned to me at one point and said, “Ready when you are, Mr. Music Man.”

In the same show, there was a beautiful twelve-year old ballerina, dancing a routine from *Swan Lake*. The organ I was using in the pit had a cassette deck incorporated in it, to play through the organ speakers. The young ballerina’s music was taped, so I would just press the play button and sit back and enjoy her dancing.

On one afternoon performance, I pressed the play button and horrors, rock ‘n’ roll music came out. The tape had been switched. In error or on purpose, who knows? I stopped the music, and our young dancer continued, unruffled, with poise and posture, without music, as if nothing had happened. When I apologised to her, after the performance, she didn’t seem too upset, but I don’t know what she was really thinking.

I can remember one of the dancers wanted the music to the *Ritual Fire Dance*. As I was pianist/conductor, I sweated over, practising and learning to play this music. I have never considered myself a good classical pianist. A clever pop and jazz pianist yes, but not a classical one, never. I made it.

Another show that had its dull moments was *Annie Get Your Gun* (1978). The director, who really was an actor, told me in front of the cast, in no uncertain terms, that the music and singing were only secondary to the stage acting and choreography. That did not go down too well with me and there were a few fireworks between us. “Music and singing only secondary in a musical? Give over.”

Great songs, but a script, that in my opinion, needed a massive rewrite and update. I wanted to start the whole show with that wonderful song (featured later in the show) *There’s No Business Like Show Business*, but the director said no, without reason. I wonder why? Oh I forgot! Music is only secondary.

For the opening of Act Two, there is a very short music introduction, the curtain pulls up on a “musical cue” and the orchestra then sleeps for the next 35 minutes. (Books, crosswords and magazines are good at this point in time.)

The storyline is that Annie is on a boat travelling from America to France. So one night I gave out to the orchestra the music to the *Can Can* by Offenbach. (Well, she **was** going to Paris.) We played it, the curtains were rolled back, (on the musical cue?) and for 35 minutes, the dialogue continued. Afterwards, not one comment was made backstage, from cast, technicians, production team or the director. I guess there are several hundred people, out there in the audience, who think the *Can Can* comes from *Annie Get Your Gun* and not *Orpheus in the Underworld*.

I don’t want you to think that all musical theatre has tricks happening at every performance. But they do happen.

Generally the audience, and sometimes the Director and Musical Director, are completely unaware of the interchanges within the cast. They find out after the show, usually at drinks or parties, where tales and home truths are revealed.

In a performance, lines can be forgotten or left out. Ad libbing can take over, while the poor MD and Prompt (the person who

follows the script and helps or prompts the actors when they get lost or forget lines) try to find where the problem is and get things back on track.

I, fortunately, have never had to stop in a production and pick up the pieces, but I have seen performances where it has happened and the whole show has fallen apart. While audiences are 'kinda forgiving', newspaper critics can sometimes be very harsh and unsympathetic.

There were a few things I observed while conducting *West Side Story* and I had nothing to do with their occurrence.

There was one occasion that was completely out of anyone's control. In the final scene, Chico runs up to Tony with a pistol and shoots him at point blank range. During one performance, the gun didn't go off. Tony and Chico were left standing face to face. "Bang", says Chico. Tony reacted and fell down dead, as if he had been shot. Top marks Chico.

In the, *I feel Pretty* scene, the girls were all singing and parading in 'shortie nighties.' At one performance I noticed two of the girls wearing flannelette pyjamas.

In another scene from *West Side Story* our hero, Tony has spent time in bed with Maria. In the half-light, with his naked body, back to the audience, he gets dressed. In one performance a jet of cold water hit him on the bare back as he pulled up his trousers. I think the water came from the brass section of the orchestra. Some brass players can be real fun, troublemakers, but more about that later. In the same scene on another evening's performance, Tony's folded trousers were placed in their usual place, but this evening they had been stitched together and he couldn't put them on. He made a hurried exit, trousers in hand as the lights came up.

I should mention, that by choice I rarely used strings (apart from contra bass) in my pit orchestra, just a piano, woodwind, brass, percussion and in later times, a synthesiser, occasionally two pianos.

Sometimes, when conducting an amplified show, I would use an off stage vocal group, working on microphone, in the orchestra pit, under my baton. This helped the onstage chorus when the orchestra was told, as they often are, ‘you are playing too loudly.’

“Sing louder” I would reply. “Or don’t have the chorus dancing and singing at the same time.”

Gilbert always complained to Sullivan that his music was too loud and the audience could not hear his lyrics, while Sullivan would reply that Gilbert’s words got in the way of his music.

There have been some heated, stand-up arguments with some choreographers and myself.

For example:

The chorus sometimes could be choreographed to stand around the stage like statues, allowed facial movements and gestures only, while the principals were singing and doing ‘their bit’. Now when it came time for the chorus to sing, and we had rehearsed the songs very hard and they were singing well, they were then instructed to dance and learn a range of fancy dance steps while still singing, sometimes with their backs to the audience. Most chorus members are singers and not dancers and if asked to do both, inevitably attract the ire of the choreographer.

In one show, the men were singing their little hearts out, while the girls danced around them. Then at one point, the girls leap into the arms of the men, while the men are singing! I have to ask you.

Some choreographers, and I emphasise some, because I have worked with wonderful choreographers, have no or little appreciation for the musical content of a show and they seem to count beats and measure bar numbers in a funny, confusing way for musicians.

While conducting *Die Fledermaus*, (*The Bat*) by Johann Strauss II (1979), the orchestra of about fifty players were placed off stage to the left in the wings while I stood at the edge of the stage in full view of the audience.

We had had many problems putting this show together, mainly because the opera company had previously toured the opera around provincial New Zealand using only a piano accompaniment. It is easier for a pianist to catch up, slow down, speed up, miss a beat or two, even a few bars, to keep together with the singers. It's quite a different story to get fifty musicians to do the same thing and all follow together. Near impossible.

The result was that the singers had become quite sloppy, probably unknowingly; shall we say a little too relaxed? Consequently there were problems. When the soloists were on the far side of the stage, I could not hear them over the volume of my orchestra. No microphones and fold back speakers here. I had the orchestra in my ears and the singers were not used to watching a conductor anyway and worked on the principle that, 'The pianist will follow me'.

Keeping it all together was very difficult and quite stressful. I asked for different stage placements, closer to me so I could hear the singers, but no, I was told, we have been standing here for X number of performances and this is the way it will stay.

There are some directors that you choose not to work with again and the feeling is probably mutual, thinking, "That musical director was so difficult to work with and so demanding".

Anyway, during one performance of *Die Fledermaus*, opening to Act Two, the orchestra is playing the Entr'acte (introduction). I turned the page of my score to find in horror, stapled on to the next page, the first month of a Playboy calendar. I frantically tore this out and threw it on the floor. I was, remember, in full view of the audience with the orchestra off-stage. Trying to remain calm, I turned the next page and the next and what did I find? The whole twelve pages of the calendar stapled throughout the section of the Entr'acte. At the time I was not amused.

When the first available break came, I took a good look around the orchestra and there at the back, were two French horn players, arms folded with big grins on their faces. What could I do? Remember what I have said about brass players. Oops! My first instrument I learnt to play was the Euphonium in a brass band.

At one concert I was conducting, I turned the page and a piece of paper had been slipped into my score. It read, in large letters, "Smile, damn you".

Having learnt my lesson, I never leave my scores on my music stand any more. I keep them with me at all times, even when travelling on aeroplanes. They go with me as hand luggage. In fact I tell my players to never leave music in a concert hall. Instruments can be replaced; some music can never easily be replaced.

Not too many good memories about that show, if any. I love the music though and it was fun for the orchestra to play.

To be involved in this make believe world of the stage was fun and exciting, especially when you are young. It was hard work and at times, very exciting to say the least, in spite of the long rehearsal hours. I also quickly realised, that getting any reasonable money for your services, talent and time, other than for expenses, was a joke.

Robyn Hood: Outlaw Princess, (libretto by John Reynolds), a female rock version of the tales of Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest, emerged a few years later - after *Hi Ya Messiah* and *Peter*, while I was Composer in Schools. This work was popular and received many successful productions, mainly in schools. It is still being performed today, worldwide, as I write this book. I conducted several productions myself.

There was a young girl I will always remember, not because of anything other than her stage performance and presence, during the premiere of this rock musical. Even though I had written the music, I was not actually conducting the premier.

A very large cast of boys and girls was auditioned from the High School that the musical was written for.

This particular girl was one of those quiet, insignificant, nothing type people, that were hardly ever noticed or their name remembered. A person you never got to know or associate with.

She failed the singing audition but indicated that she wanted to be in the performance. We cast her in the townspeople crowd scene as a village harlot, mainly because there appeared to be a lack of acting ability also. At least she could stand there and try and look pretty and say she was part of the show.



A scene from Robyn Hood Outlaw Princess

As she entered the musical theatre world of fantasy, the transformation was unbelievable. With stage makeup on, a new hair do, a low cut slinky dress, this girl came to life. Stand around and look pretty she did not. Every move was seductive. She glowed so much she outshone many of the cast. She had sex appeal to burn and looked great without going over the top.

School staff watching would comment and ask:

“Who is that?”

“Oh it’s.... what’s her name? I can’t remember.”

“Not so and so?”

“Yes, that’s right”

“I don’t believe it!”

She was a natural. I don't know if she followed an acting career. She should have done. I never ever knew her name.

In this show, trying to get the boys to wear tights or makeup was a mission in itself. They soon realised, that when they were all dressed the same it was like wearing a uniform for a sports team and strangely enough, after a performance or two, boys could be heard asking, "How's my makeup? Does it look ok?"



I was invited to be music director for a local choral society in conjunction with a theatre group for an evening with Gilbert and Sullivan (1999).

I worked with this choir on several memorable occasions in the past including: Cormac O'Duffy's cantata *Hear O Israel* (1998) and a wonderful performance of *Hiawatha's Wedding* by Coleridge-Taylor (2005).

A Gilbert and Sullivan evening was most memorable for me because of a big 'stuff up' that I made.

Three of the most popular musical numbers were chosen from six of the G & S light operas (or perhaps musical comedies as they were sometimes called), with a narrator portraying the plot, the characters and introducing the songs, as the master of ceremonies. The choir was placed on risers on stage with room in front for the soloists, theatre group and dancers to perform, with the narrator at a podium on stage to the left.

I conducted the small theatre orchestra from in front of the stage on a raised orchestra pit at floor level, in a lovely, intimate auditorium. The narrator's script was taped into my musical score as loose pages, at the final dress rehearsal. All was going very smoothly during the performance. The audience were receptive and we even had them singing along to some of the popular songs from the *Mikado*.

The narrator was a retired minister with a beautiful speaking voice and the choir theatre group and orchestra were in top form. Everyone was enjoying themselves. We came to the last opera, *The Pirates of Penzance* and I launched into the music. Half way through the first number I realised my blunder. I had not allowed the narrator time to ‘read his bit.’ I had turned over the narration page in error. He stood there quietly looking at me. What should I do? Help!

Swiftly, I made the executive decision, put my hands up and stopped all proceedings. I then turned to the audience and explained that I was not happy with the performance and would they mind if we rehearsed a few things like in an open rehearsal. (That is where an audience is invited to attend a rehearsal.)

The audience thought this was hilarious and all part of the show. Choirs and orchestras are used to being stopped and restarted at rehearsals, especially by me. They responded because there was nothing unfamiliar about this – except stopping during a concert?

Apart from myself, the only people who were aware of what was really going on were the narrator and the director, and the latter was probably tearing her hair out. I rehearsed little bits and pieces, practised the choir sitting and standing much to the amusement and enjoyment of the audience. At one point when the choir sat down, the solo soprano stood up, to which I told her in a commanding voice, over much laughter and hilarity from the audience, “It’s not your turn. Sit down.” Turning to the narrator who was standing patiently waiting, I said, “Mr Narrator, if you please,” to which he replied without any emotion, “As I was saying,” and continued with the introduction to the *Pirates of Penzance*.

Some comments after the show were:

“That was fun.”

“Didn’t expect that – quite a surprise.”

“What a hoot. It worked.”

“Gary?”

I did get to do a second series of *Gilbert and Sullivan* with the same group in the following year. It was a very popular and successful musical concept.

In the musical number *Three Little Maids from School* from *The Mikado*, the director chose the biggest and oldest three women available with bulges everywhere. They were a riot, all experienced singers and actors. They brought the house down. It made a change from using grown men in schoolgirl gym dresses and dancing the number, baring hairy legs. I have used these hairy legs with a whole chorus line of a male football team to dance the *Can Can*. Now that was something else, garters and all.

During one of my school concert series with the Symphony, I took my orchestra to a local school hall and presented in a morning, three, forty-five minute concerts, one after the other with a 10 minute break in-between. The surrounding schools came to the one central venue, went in one door and out the other. A group of 10 and 11 year old girls from the host school had told me previously that they would dance the *Can Can* for me with the orchestra. I gave them a cassette recording of the music to practise to and promptly forgot all about it until the day of the concert when we all arrived at the school hall.

“We are all ready. When and where do you want us to dance?”

The girls’ mothers had made the costumes for them. You can always get away with *Can Can* girls if they are young and cute. We accommodated them while they danced on the stage while the orchestra played on the floor (we couldn’t fit on the stage anyhow) and they performed without a rehearsal. In the first concert they were a little shaky but after that they were little stars. Thanks girls, you were all great.

The school concerts were called “What’s in an Orchestra?” and over the years I have conducted many, demonstrating the instruments, getting young ones up to conduct and playing only music that the younger audiences were familiar with. No *Carnival of the Animals*, *Peter and the Wolf* or *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra* for me. These works are far too dated and ‘old hat’ musically, in my opinion.



The Waitangi Treaty House



The Waitangi Meeting House

ACT 1

(Scene 3)

Waitangi Day

After the success of, *Man of Sorrows* the director was asked by the New Zealand Government to direct the overall pageant for the 1974 Waitangi Day Celebration.

As the Director and I had previously worked well together and understood each other's strange ways and habits, he asked for me, I accepted and was appointed to the role of Music Director (MD.) This was an official Government appointment.

I should point out that a Musical Director directs the music in musical theatre. A Music Director is the director of music, usually in orchestras, bands and music ensembles.

Waitangi Day, 6 February, is New Zealand's national day. It has been an annual public holiday in New Zealand, since 1974, celebrating the signing of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi that gave the British sovereignty, while guaranteeing land rights to the New Zealand Maori. Many people consider the Treaty to be the foundation of modern New Zealand society, but differences between the English and Maori texts of the Treaty, and breaches of its terms in the years following its signing, have complicated New Zealanders' sense of the ongoing importance of this agreement.

Waitangi is in the Bay of Islands, a major tourist region in the far north of the North Island of New Zealand.

The Waitangi Day Celebration was one of my major musical engagements and achievements and I look back on it now with amazement. It was our task to present an extravaganza, a musical

pageant, to acknowledge the country's multicultural identity representing all the ethnic groups living in New Zealand. Leading local entertainers of the time and people of many cultures played the key roles.

The pageant, which was named Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud), depicted the country's journey from the arrival of Kupe (first known Maori Chief to land in New Zealand) towards nationhood. First to arrive after the Maori were the English, Irish, Welsh and Scots (performing to the tune 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'). The Dalmatians, Danes, Dutch and other European races, Pacific Islanders and Indians followed singing and dancing to 'The Age of Aquarius.'

Some of the country's historical successes and troubles were captured in the adaptations of well-known melodies, adding a touch of humour, or as some commented, poor taste.

As music director my job was to arrange and co-ordinate all the chosen music so that it could be performed (sung and danced) by a cast of thousands, made up of massed Maori, ethnic and cultural groups and to be accompanied by the Royal New Zealand Navy Military Band. I also had to rehearse them all and conduct the final performance.

The Waitangi Day Celebration was indeed a very Royal occasion, with the presence of Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of England (who had been in New Zealand for the Commonwealth Games held in Christchurch) and key members of the British Royal family. The military were involved, including a full Navy presence, with all the formal pomp and circumstance and traditional proceedings and protocol.

The main performance for the outdoor Celebration was held on the original picturesque Treaty House grounds. This was a very large, cliff top, gently sloping, grassed area with a permanent flagstaff, majestically erected centre field, in front of the Maori Treaty House.

The commanding sea views out across the Bay of Islands, named for obvious reasons, were incredible, a beautiful setting. The Royal Navy had warships anchored in the Bay, as was the Queen's own ship, the 'Britannia', making it a spectacular sight.

My conductor's podium was a metre high square box, placed facing this stunning view in the middle of the grassed arena where everyone could see me. Did I fall off it? Of course I did but only during rehearsal. I was often distracted by the view. There were no railings around my 'box' and as I moved quite a lot in my younger days when I conducted, almost to the point of dancing, I kept stepping back and falling off. It was my own fault because I was asked how big I wanted my podium and I should have had it built larger. Not enough thought went into this on my part. A rail was erected behind me, to avoid me stepping off backwards on the day itself.

I was not allowed a music stand. The wind would have blown the music away anyhow. I had to conduct all from memory with the running order, written in very large print, taped to the top of my podium.

This two-and-a-half-hour extravaganza was watched by some 20,000 people at Waitangi and screened nationally on television unfortunately in black and white in those days. The imaginative pageantry had something for everyone from the Maori groups, the Royal New Zealand Navy, choreographed dancers, fireworks, and national folk dancing and singing, mime and pantomime. A model of a giant moa (large extinct New Zealand native flightless bird) laid an enormous egg on the spot where the original Treaty was signed.

Back in the early 70's, special effects, sound and lighting techniques were very much in their infancy. It proved to be a mammoth undertaking, with a cast much, much bigger than *Man of Sorrows*, but I was still young and stupid, with far more energy than experience or wisdom. No regrets here, on reliving the moments. It still seems a lot of work for only one performance, but then look at today's opening ceremonies for the Olympic Games.

Many of the Maori tribal groups lived in various towns and cities throughout the North Island, so to rehearse and teach them the songs and routines, the director and I travelled around New Zealand, usually by car but sometimes by small aeroplane. The local ethnic groups all came from Auckland, fortunately and by our choice, so rehearsals were a little bit more controlled and travel minimised.

Maori protocol was a new and interesting experience for me, important, necessary and to be taken very seriously. A highly respected Maori Elder travelled with us on tour and accompanied us on to the maraes (Maori meeting places), where the rehearsals were generally held. It could have proved a little stressful and difficult for the director and me without her presence and knowledge of procedure.

I can remember at one marae we ‘hongied’ or ‘rubbed noses’, a Maori welcoming custom (actually you just touch foreheads and noses), with all the tribal members and had speeches for near on two hours before I could start a rehearsal.

My piano accompanist was a TV personality in her own right, as a backing vocalist on a regular ‘pop’ show. This often proved invaluable, as people recognised her from TV. She was a very fine musician with a bubbly personality, a real asset to have along and she signed a few autographs as well.

At one time in Wellington, our capital city, because of time restraints, I requested that the four Maori tribal groups come and rehearse together.

“Gary, you cannot do this,” I was told.

“Tough. I am doing it. I don’t have time to play games.”

Consequently it was organised and the four groups did come and meet together in Wellington for the massed rehearsal. Initially, the four large, mainly youth groups, assembled on the four sides of the hall and sat staring and glaring at one other.

I had no idea that this sort of anti-tribal feeling existed, but I certainly didn't have time for any of this nonsense. Well, nonsense in my eyes at the time. After a few musical games and much persuasion from my friendly outgoing pianist, who they absolutely adored, we had everyone mixed up together, singing their little hearts out, laughing and enjoying themselves thoroughly. Music won out in the end as it usually does.

I probably caused a few domestic and personal relationship problems, but I was never told about them. These young people were happy, co-operative, wonderful to work with and all wanting and willing to be part of the inaugural Waitangi Day Celebrations.

This was only one group out of the dozens to whom I had to teach and rehearse my musical arrangements, as we travelled around New Zealand over a period of a few weeks. Every rehearsal brought its own challenges and frustrations but the enthusiasm and energy was always there. Hard work but in the end, satisfying and we made it fun.

Some of the Maori groups involved did come from Auckland region, as did the ethnic groups in New Zealand, and of these there were quite a few. Once again these ethnic groups were full of enthusiasm and excited about being a part of the Celebrations. I taught the songs while the director explained and rehearsed the choreography, dance and movement routines. There were changes to the routines as we went along. There always are. Changes were only made if necessary and were generally well accepted.

The plan was that after teaching them all the same routines and songs, we would eventually bring them all together, some several thousand of them, for a final week of concentrated rehearsals to be held in the far north of New Zealand at Waitangi.

All the groups, including the Maori participants, under our guidance, performed their own folk song and dance routines, some of the music I had to arrange for the Navy Band to accompany. Finally they were to all join together for the finale, a mass combined pageant and that was my department.

Of course there were many problems, especially with the ‘star’ performers, their egos and personality clashes. Not all the problems were musical when dealing with a cast of thousands, plus the Military involvement. It was a technical and logistical nightmare and outdoor performances presented a different set of problems. Fortunately the weather was kind to us.

Thank goodness I was concerned with just one part of it, mind you a major part at that, conducting the pageant, the big finale, at the end of the celebrations, all in front of the British Royal Family and to be televised nationally.

One small problem I did encounter was on a flight up to Waitangi in a four-seater plane. The plane made a delivery stop, landing on the beach at an outer island just short of our final destination. You guessed it. The plane got stuck in the sand. After the tractors failed to achieve anything, a rugged four-wheel drive over farmland took me to a motorboat taking me to the mainland and on to Waitangi. Oh yes! I was late for the rehearsal.

The sea plane? Well, it had to wait until the tide came in.

We rehearsed in the local school hall for hours every day. It was summer so most of us, including myself, were in casual beachwear – shorts and barefooted. My ankles became very bruised and swollen from all the footwork rehearsing on a concrete floor. I didn’t notice it at the time but suffered for a few weeks after the event.

I always felt sorry for the Navy Band. Because they were military, they had to dress in uniform all the time, even when we were rehearsing outdoors in the heat of the day. Shade was very limited. For me, being a civilian, I could wear my shorts, an open beach shirt and bare feet at times on the grassed area where we were rehearsing.

Now imagine the problem where there was only one power box on the parade ground. The lighting and sound crews, along with Television New Zealand were coping just fine until Mr Whippy,

the ice cream man, came and plugged his van into the power system. This overloaded the system, blew the fuses and took the power out for the whole area.

This was reminiscent of a similar episode while I was playing clarinet in a pit orchestra, for the opera *Carmen*.

I remember that it was winter and the nights were wet, miserable and cold, as was the orchestra pit. On opening night, the start of the show was delayed by some thirty minutes, the opening to Act II, by an even longer period of time. The curtain could not be drawn because of an electrical failure. The jumper fuses on the electrical switchboard kept cutting out because of overload. Overload, but where? The orchestra pit, of course, where Gary had plugged a heater into the orchestra music stand lighting system. I had decided that the woodwind section should be warm and cosy during the performances. A two bar heater was one bar too many for the system. How was I to know?

Back on the parade ground and at the very last minute the producer realised that the Navy Band came accompanied by a contingent of WREN drummers and, much to his disgust, he had to somehow find a place for them in the show. It was decided that all they had to do was drum in time to the music and march in file from the flagpole, past the bandstand, turn left, march across in front of the Treaty House, where the Royal party would be seated, turn left again and march back to the navy contingent beside the flagpole, all turns to be made on music cues.

So this is what happened during the final rehearsal. The first turn went all right, but halfway across the path in front of the Treaty House it was obvious to the cast and watchers that something had gone wrong with their timing. Hundreds of performers, technical crew and onlookers, all waited for the inevitable to happen. I had my back to all this and was oblivious of the proceedings. The WRENS could no longer hear the band over their own drum playing. The Drum Major kept to the Director's strict instructions, to turn on the music cue and to keep marching and playing.

A dilemma for the Drum Major suddenly became apparent as to when to turn, as she could not hear the music cue and common sense did not prevail. Ahead of her was a deep, grassed ditch that divided the fields. As the crowd watched and the ditch became closer the Drum Major suddenly stopped dead, barely a drumstick's length from the edge, without any signal or direction to her drum corp. The inevitable did happen, the 'domino effect'.

There were drums, drumsticks, arms, legs and hats, falling in all directions. Bodies everywhere, a paralysed cast and a director in hysterics. There was no quick recovery from this. Meanwhile, I was trying to see why my band had suddenly collapsed in laughter and what I had missed. I guess that's what rehearsals are for.

On the performance night itself, the drum corps had a static position. Although this was a blow to their egos, it was cheaper and safer than running a sound feed so they could hear the music! All was well.



The Royal New Zealand Navy Band at Waitangi

Before the main performance at the Waitangi celebrations my baton got misplaced. The fact that I never found it suggests perhaps it was 'souvenired'. I borrowed the Royal Navy Band Master's white stick for my section of the celebrations. Unfortunately, I didn't see him again until after he had conducted his Military part of the parade. He had to use a drumstick to conduct with, for his section of the pageant. Consequently I was certainly not the flavour of the month with him for a while.

For me there was a unique and special aspect to this Waitangi Day Celebration.

I don't know of any other civilian who has conducted a Royal Navy Band, at a State, Royal occasion, in front of Queen Elizabeth II and her immediate Royal family and was not an appointed commissioned officer. This was a real honour.



Searchlight Tattoo 2001



**Rugby Park, New Plymouth
8.00pm, 24th & 25th February**

Presented by the Searchlight Tattoo Trust Inc

In Conjunction with The Taranaki Festival of the Arts

www.taranakifest.org.nz

ACT 1

(Scene 4)

Searchlight Tattoo

Another special military occasion for me was to be Director of Music for a Military Searchlight Tattoo. In New Zealand this is equivalent to Scotland's famous Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

The first ever Tattoo was held in Scotland in the 17th Century and in the early 1900's became known as the Searchlight Tattoo after searchlights were introduced to light up the evening festivities. Today there are approximately 200 Tattoo events held worldwide annually. In New Zealand we have over 140 brass and pipe bands.

A Tattoo is traditionally, a military-style pageant that incorporates entertainment by musicians, dancers, choirs, orchestras, marching displays, military and police manoeuvres, helicopters, an air force fly past with a mix of defence bands and civilian brass and pipe bands. This Tattoo involved some 1500 performers in over twenty acts, including local talent, the New Zealand Army, Air Force and Royal Navy bands along with guest bands and musicians from overseas. A wonderful experience for musicians to meet, associate and perform together to large audiences in a well organized production.

Generally, the Music Director from one of the Armed Forces Defence Bands takes the role, but on one occasion, because of the unavailability of a bandmaster and my previous experience in working with the Military and with brass and pipe bands, I was offered the position. My Searchlight Tattoo was held in 2002, in the provincial New Zealand town of New Plymouth



Gary on the back of Land Rover conducting the Massed Bands

Imagine the setting.

A large rugby field, without the goalposts (in fact it was called Rugby Park), a grandstand down one side, terraced on two sides and at one end a large replica castle wall built, resembling Edinburgh Castle, with turrets and a castle gate. At night under floodlights the setting was spectacular. Add to this all the colour of the military uniforms and costuming and you have one awesome sight.

It has always been the custom for the Musical Director to make a grand and unusual entry, e.g. by helicopter, skydiving or by parachute. But remember I am a civilian and not military trained. My grand entry was to be standing on the back of an army Landrover. This truck was to be my podium.

Before a concert I usually mingle backstage with the musicians, just reassuring one other that it will be a great concert. All small talk, to settle nerves, that is, providing English is a common language and it is not always the case.

I can get quite nervous before some concerts. I never feel that I have had enough rehearsal time and there is always the unknown and the human factor- hence the material for this book.

There was one concert with my own orchestra where the concertmaster had tuned the orchestra was seated and audience and orchestra were waiting for Gary's grand entry. Where was he? He was sitting on a table in the wings swinging his legs and telling the stage manager, "I don't want to do this."

"Get out there now" was his response, as I was pushed out onto the stage and the nerves disappeared. There was a job to be done and enjoyed.

So at the Military Tattoo, here I am at the back of a wooden mock up castle. The nerves had set in quite a while back, when I first heard the screaming fans waiting for what was promised to be a spectacular event. This was a first for me and no matter how many shows, concerts or performances one does, the nerves can still get in the way.

The questions keep running through my mind as I smile at and acknowledge the other participants in this pageant, over a thousand of them, who probably are all having similar thoughts. "Have I got all the right music and is it in order? What happens after the Fanfare? What's the order again? Do I need to go to the toilet again and have another nervous one?"

Standing in the back of the open land rover the same thoughts keep circulating,

"I am focused, it has all been well rehearsed, I know my music, I know the sequences, and it will all be good, it will be fun, it will be..."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Girls and Boys. Everyone. Please put your hands together for our Director of Music. It's Showtime!"

The land rover passed through the gates of the mock castle wall. We circled the entire arena with me waving to the cheering crowds of thousands – me in my white jacket, coming to a halt centre field in front of and facing the castle wall.

How did I feel? To be honest, I was quite uncomfortable and felt out of place. “Who’s that idiot?” the crowd must be thinking, as I tried to maintain my composure. “Who does he think he is – the King of wherever, waving to his subjects and followers?”

I was acting on instructions and doing what I was told. The uneasiness soon passed, as there was a job to be done and to enjoy. The trumpeters were standing in the battlements awaiting my command. It was given, the fanfare sounded and the Military Searchlight Tattoo was underway with me in supposed control from the back of the army land rover centre field.

The castle gates opened and out marched bands, brass and wind, pipes and drums, the display teams and the marching girls, eight alternating flanks of brass, bagpipes and drums all in glorious Technicolor. I remember thinking at the time “Wow! I have the best seat (even though I was standing) in the house.

It looked so spectacular as they all marched toward me. The sound – well, that was a different story. Something I had not experienced at the final dress rehearsal was the echo and sound delay reverberating around the packed stadium. It was an amazing cacophony of sound which, in actual fact, was quite disturbing, especially when I heard that the right hand flanks were one beat behind the left hand flanks. All I could do was wave my arms, turn my ears off and leave it to the bands to sort themselves out.

Surprisingly enough they all stayed marching and playing together as two separate groups, each one beat out. Did the audience notice or comment? In fact were the musicians even aware of what I was hearing? I doubt it. No comment was made to me. The musicians would only have heard what they were playing and the audience would have heard the music that was closest to them.

There was certainly nothing wrong with the performance, but it was quite nerve wracking for me I have to confess. The audience could possibly have thought, “That guy out there in the white jacket cannot keep in time with the musicians!”

As the performers, some 1500 of them, approached me, the land rover slowly drove forward keeping in front of them, driving to the far end of the stadium, as I continued to try and keep them all in time and together, from the open back of the land rover, my podium.

Conductors are generally only figureheads and the musicians can be far more experienced and knowledgeable about the situation in hand. I had appointed a band major and a piper major to assist me. Trust me, these two were invaluable. Interestingly enough, the pipe major and I had gone through Grammar School together, having lived only a few houses away from each other. We had not been in contact with each other since our school days as we had lived in different parts of the country. It was good to share this occasion and we have kept in touch since then.

After the opening ceremony I was able to relax, sit back and enjoy the other features of the Tattoo - the marching brass band displays and routines, mock battles, military drills, the police dogs in action, the air force fly past, helicopters and the young people from local schools involved in creative dance and movement.

I tried not to reflect on the problems experienced in the opening ceremony and to remain focused for my next involvement in the programme. This was the massed brass band performance that included, traditionally, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*.

This was not the first time I had conducted this work and I remember only too well the very first time. It was with one of London's top orchestras, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

How often does a conductor get the opportunity to conduct the *1812 Overture*? Not often, but there has to be a first time and the London Orchestra was it, but more about that in another scene.

So what was different about the *1812* at the Tattoo to the London Orchestra?

Firstly, I was conducting a combined mass military (brass and woodwind) band of some one hundred and sixty players and not a Symphony Orchestra of some seventy plus players.

Secondly, this was not the first time for me to conduct the *1812 Overture* in concert but first time outside in the open.

Thirdly there were six heavy-duty canons, compliment of the Royal NZ Artillery, and sounding off close by, in my ear, and not the electronically simulated cannons of the London Orchestra.

Lastly, it rained during the performance and we were not under cover as with the London Orchestra.

As the rain started to gently fall about half way through the performance I could see the players, especially those in the woodwind, looking for me to stop and retreat to cover.

I was once in the audience at an open air Symphony Orchestra concert held in an ancient Roman Coliseum in Southern Turkey and it started to rain but not heavily. The conductor stopped, left the podium with the orchestra in hot pursuit. They returned when the brief shower had passed. In my case I hung in there and the light drizzle stopped. It was a wise decision to continue but the cannons were still very loud in my ears. I decided to wear white gloves so that performers at a distance would be able to see my direction a little clearer. Because it was an outdoor evening performance I placed my music sheets inside a clear plastic folder. Have you ever tried to turn plastic sheets with cotton gloves on? The gloves lasted one number.

The Tattoo ran for two evening performances. During the first performance a sheet of my music blew off my music stand and was picked up by a policeman standing on parade in front of me with the police dogs. He folded it and placed it inside his jacket. Fortunately we had played this music.

“Great,” I thought, “he will give it back to me at the end of the performance. Not likely. There was no sight or sound of him at



Searchlight Tattoo - Rugby Park - New Plymouth

the end of the performance and I didn't have a spare score for the following night's performance. I had to spend a considerable amount of time, hand writing out the music, enough to get me through.

The following night I'm standing on my podium in the second performance as the police dog handlers march on and take up their positions in front of me. The policeman, who picked up my music the night before, pulls it from his jacket and hands it to me. I ask you!

Now, the police dogs and handlers are standing in front of me with the massed bands behind them and the riflemen platoon positioned behind me. As arranged, the massed bands play four bars of the New Zealand National Anthem and the riflemen then fire a shot into the air. They reload with three clicks of the breach and the massed bands play another four bars under my direction of course.

There's another break in the music followed by more blank rounds fired.

My cue was the three clicks of the rifles reloading, which were quite audible at rehearsals. But at rehearsal there were no dogs. During the performance, the dogs continually howled and I couldn't hear the rifle clicks for my musical cue. Remember musical cues with the drummer ladies at Waitangi? There was a lot of guesswork here. At the end of all this I was a little confused and distracted. There was a moment of silence, perhaps a long moment of silence as I refocused. What now I wondered? Then I heard the Band Major bellow out "Band to the Ready"! This was a ridiculous call when you think about it. The band was already at the ready with instruments held high waiting for a command from me to play. It was the Band Major telling me to get on with it. We all need a little nudge sometimes!

Thank you Band Major.

This was a highly successful tattoo, greatly enjoyed by large audiences on both nights. It was great to see the main stand packed to capacity and let us not forget the spectacular fireworks display during the *1812 Overture*.

I have since conducted several brass and pipe band combined concerts, including a Grand Massed Bands Armistice Day Concert in 2006. It is always a thrill. I do often wonder though about how, when and if they ever tune their instruments, certainly not like an orchestra tunes.





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PRELUDE to ACT 2

The Birth of an Orchestra The Auckland Symphony Orchestra

I have often been asked how and why I became a symphony orchestra conductor. I usually say because I got too old to 'Rock 'n' Roll'. The real truth is that I became an orchestral conductor by serendipity.

In the early 70's I was perfecting my conducting technique and establishing myself as a conductor in the world of musical theatre, mainly with amateur operatic societies, and being paid travelling money as a token gesture for my services.

"Don't give up your day job as a Commerce teacher," I was told. There is no money in being a musical director, and how true that statement was.

It was in 1974 while conducting *West Side Story* an event happened that altered the direction of my life and laid the foundation for my whole musical career.

A gentleman who had once been former President of the Auckland Junior Symphony Orchestra (JSO) now the Auckland Youth Orchestra (AYO) approached the orchestra pit at the end of the performance to talk with the players and me.

During the compliments on the production and on our performance he commented that most of the players were ex-JSO members and suggested we all get together for a players' reunion to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the orchestra. We all thought that was a great idea as many past players were playing professionally in New Zealand and in orchestras overseas and it would be great to catch up. However, I said, "Forget it! I haven't touched the clarinet in years."

I was a clarinetist in the JSO for many years until the management committee decided I was well past my junior years and asked me to make way for younger players. I didn't play the clarinet much after I left the JSO, just a little bit of Dixieland, jazz and rock 'n' roll saxophone. I was playing a lot of pop and jazz piano though.

"Oh no, you don't need to play the clarinet" came the firm reply.
"You can conduct."

"You must be joking!"

"No! I am quite serious."

"But I have only ever conducted small pit orchestras for musical theatre. I don't know the first thing about conducting a large symphony orchestra."

"You will be fine. I have every confidence in you. You did study it?"

"What will we play? Where will I find the music?"

Panic! A good night's performance of *West Side Story* has just been destroyed. There'll be no sleep for me tonight.

"I'm sure you will be able to arrange a programme and locate the music. Talk with your players here. I will arrange dates, venues and contact past players."

"Thanks a million. Do I really need this?"

So it came to pass, that with the help of my musical colleagues we put together a programme of favourite music we had played together in our years with the orchestra. The music was, of course, all in the JSO music library. After a few helpful conducting tips and guidance from my orchestral friends, plus many long hours of learning to read full orchestral scores, I ended up conducting a reunion orchestra of some seventy-five players.

We had three rehearsals and I only got to see and hear all the players together at the performance. The evening concert turned out to be a surprise 60th birthday party for the JSO's former long-standing conductor Dr. Charles Nalden. He was pleasantly surprised to

see so many familiar faces from previous years playing many of his favourite works. Of course I offered him the baton, which he accepted without hesitation. For the first time I felt a certain tenseness in the players. They were being taken back into their young JSO rehearsal days. After a few bars of music, Dr. Nalden stopped the orchestra, tapped the baton on the music stand and made a few of his usual comments. There was laughter and the anxiety disappeared.

The evening was one of magic and success in more ways than one could ever imagine, from good music to the reuniting of past friends.

As I have often said, orchestras don't always need a conductor; in fact, conductors can get in the way. I did just fine and it all worked out well. I guess I didn't get in the way too much. Oh yes, I was nervous, but I was with friends.

The leader of the viola section did comment to me after the concert that in Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* she noticed that my downbeat was 'out' with the orchestra. She wondered whether to go with me or keep to her section with the orchestra? She stayed with the orchestra - wise lady. Apparently I corrected myself after a few measures.

Many of the Auckland players wanted to stay together as an orchestra. Some played in small groups, mainly string groups, but not in orchestras. They knew of players who were not ex-JSO players who would love to be involved in such an orchestra. It was openly discussed and they pointed at me. You are to be our conductor.

So, the Music Players of Auckland was born and I became an orchestral conductor. The name was changed two years later to the Auckland Symphony Orchestra. Initially, there were fifty-five players in the Auckland Symphony Orchestra (ASO) with me as Music Director and Conductor, heralding a major shift in my musical direction. Back there in 1975, how was I to know where, by forming this orchestra that it and my conducting career would take me?

When I speak of the ASO as ‘my’ orchestra, I must emphasise that without players you do not have an orchestra and one person cannot do it alone as you need help and support. I had the support of a very strong lady who played in the orchestra and like me; she was very ambitious and dedicated. We both wanted the best for the orchestra. She was a wonderful administrator and we worked well together as a team. You could say it was ‘our’ orchestra with a little help from our friends. Without her the ASO would not have survived and be where it is today. I thank you Pat sincerely for those many years of toil and tolerance of me. We both saw the potential of the orchestra in changing the name to the Auckland Symphony Orchestra in 1977 and making it an Incorporated Society.

We started with humble beginnings, rehearsing in church halls, giving free Sunday afternoon concerts to family audiences and friends, served afternoon tea in the church crypt after the concert and placing a donation box at the door, usually a viola case. (Larger than a violin case.)

Today the ASO is a community-based orchestra of some ninety players drawn from all parts of Auckland and from all walks of life and include professional people who earn a living outside music – doctors, teachers, lawyers, chemists, scientists, engineers and others. I often stand at the podium and look down in awe at the paper qualifications sitting in front of me.

The main philosophy of the orchestra is that music should be fun and enjoyed by players and audiences alike - hence the regular, free, family concerts that are offered in Auckland and out-of-town areas where a live performance by a Symphony Orchestra is a rare event.

Through the years I directed the orchestra as a benevolent dictatorship and I make no apologies for that. I always referred to the ASO as ‘my’ orchestra, once again without apology, and the players frequently referred to it as ‘Gary’s orchestra.’

In the early years of the orchestra we performed in St Mary’s Cathedral in Parnell, a wonderful large old wooden church, built in the true Gothic style out of native New Zealand timber and

acoustically excellent. The foundation stone was laid in 1886 and the church consecrated in 1898. During 1982, St Mary's, in what was a major feat of engineering, was moved and transported across the road and turned through 90 degrees onto its present site, into the precinct of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. The foundation stone of the new Holy Trinity Cathedral was laid in 1957. The building of the nave commenced in 1991 and was completed in 1995. The Cathedral is renowned for its modern stained glass.

There was not a great deal of space for a large orchestra in the altar area of St Mary's and there were some pillars in the way, but we were allowed to move a side altar and some of the front pews to accommodate us and we could seat an audience of around 300 people.

One young 'cellist who was playing her first concert with us was unfortunately seated behind a pillar. She was not impressed and said to me in no uncertain terms, "Gary, I am not sitting behind that pillar. Shift me or I am going home." "Wow! I thought to myself, this is one stropky young lady." She was an excellent player so I obliged and seated her elsewhere. She was destined to become section leader of the 'cellos and the orchestra secretary for many years and perhaps more importantly, my right hand (wo) man. I am indebted, for her wisdom and down to earth reality, keeping my feet on the ground, along with her loyal friendship and guidance.

On some occasions during the Saturday afternoon rehearsal, while rehearsing in St Mary's for our Sunday Family Concerts, the rain would pour down, to such an extent that I could hardly hear the orchestra above the pounding of the rain on the slate tiled roof. Some players thought this ominous for the following day's concert, but I was never worried. As far as I was concerned, an unvaried pattern always unfolded and I had faith. I was performing in God's House.

On the Sunday morning it could be bucketing down but by one o'clock when the orchestra was setting up the rain would stop. The audience would arrive and listen to the concert in beautiful

sunshine. By five o'clock it could be 'hosing' down again. Although not a regular churchgoer, I certainly do have faith that my orchestra and I were being well watched over.

It rarely rained when I had a concert and this has happened many times – the Supreme Being controlling the weather for me. Without being blasphemous, it was often commented that I had direct contact with the 'Boy' upstairs.

One Friday evening, after a shocker of a week weather-wise, with heavy rain and winds, really quite miserable, I was asked by one of the choir ladies just before an annual Christmas Concert, where I used combined massed church choirs with the symphony, "Do you have faith? I think you do."

I said to her, "Is it raining this evening?"

"No."

"I have faith."

As the orchestra developed and progressed over the years, so did my conducting and we were outgrowing St Mary's. We could no longer accommodate the large audiences we were attracting and we were turning people away from our concerts. This really was not a good look. The Dean of the Cathedral was once heard to say, as he stood at the back of St Mary's, hands on hips and watching the crowds flock into his church "What has Gary got that I haven't? I never get this many people at my services."

The relationship with the Dean and the orchestra became very strong, to a point at one stage where he actually asked me to change the name of the orchestra to the St Mary's Symphony, to which I politely and graciously declined. I had bigger plans for the orchestra.

I had been appointed Music Director for the 1990 Commonwealth Games. The new Aotea Centre, a performing arts and events centre/theatre in the Auckland CBD, was under construction, due to be completed by the time of the Games in early 1990. Unfortunately this was not to be. It was not completed until

later in that year. I would walk around the construction site with the Chief Executive both of us wearing hard hats, and he would complain to me, “I see other buildings around Auckland coming down and going up, why isn’t my building going up faster?”

Eventually the Aotea Centre was finished and because of the friendship that had developed between the management of the Centre and myself, the ASO was the first orchestra to play in the new concert hall, not for a concert, but to test acoustics. We played on the stage using the sound shell, on the stage extension, in the orchestra pit; all while the sound technicians recorded their calculations. It was a fun evening for us, just like another rehearsal but in a different venue. This opened the door for what was to be a lasting association for the Auckland Symphony Orchestra and the Aotea Centre now part of The Edge.

But we did keep our ties with the Dean and the Cathedral. There was one celebrated occasion, one December, when the weather should have been fine. I was presenting a Friday night open-air concert, to raise money for the roof of the nave of the new Holy Trinity Cathedral, which was being built alongside the beautiful old wooden St Mary’s Cathedral. The Auckland Savings Bank had offered to subsidize the funding 10:1. Because of my long-standing and good relationship with the Dean, I offered to organize and present this concert of Christmas music with the reading of appropriate biblical excerpts.

It was to be a concert performed inside the new roofless nave, with the Symphony Orchestra, a fairly extensive choir, soloists, and prominent people as readers and narrators.

Although it was fine for our midweek rehearsal it bucketed down for the rest of the week, including most of Friday. Many of those involved wanted us to cancel the concert but I refused, pointing out that if you are ever going to have faith in anything, now was the time. “We’re doing the concert for God’s house, not for us, so trust me.” About 4.30 on Friday afternoon it stopped raining. All the water was mopped up and swept out and everything was put into position. A pity about the plastic chairs that they had not been tilted forward, as they all had a little puddle of water sitting in them and I did hear of players negotiating drips of water

from the rafters above. That night the moon came out and the orchestra played and the voices sang and spoke under the stars, even if a little chilly, to a capacity audience. At the conclusion our Dean spoke about the fund-raising effort, with the result that a considerable sum of money was raised that night. However, even with the bank's donation the funding fell short by several thousand dollars.

The rainless night had an intriguing sequel. The following Monday morning a German tourist walked into the Dean's office. He explained that he'd never experienced such a wonderful concert in his life and asked whether or not they'd achieved their fundraising goal. When the Dean explained that they were still several thousand dollars short the German presented him with the balance in travellers' cheques. True story.

The successful Christmas Concert in the new Cathedral in the late 1990s paved the way for future Carol concerts. I conducted the first of the now annual *Christmas in the Park* series, where thirty to forty thousand people attended, but today, this event can sometimes attract crowds of around a hundred thousand or more. The ASO has never performed at *Christmas in the Park*; we started our own Carol Concerts.

Christmas in the Park was actually the first outdoor concert I ever conducted. It consisted of a large combined church choir and a pop group with an added string section. This was a very successful concept and was held in the Auckland Domain. I don't recall much about this inaugural concert. The rhythm section and soloists were carefully rehearsed as I remember and held the whole show together. I followed them and I seemed to have only the choir and strings to concentrate on. It worked, no dramas, no stress and it didn't rain!

Actually, I do not like outdoor concerts, the unpredictable nature of the weather and the sound quality being my main concerns.

Following the successes of the Cathedral Christmas Concert and The Carols in the Park, I decided to experiment with a free sing along Carol and Christmas music concert at the Auckland Town

Hall, which was under the management of the Edge, and invited some Pacific Island Church youth choirs to participate.

In 1998 the annual *Free Family Sing Along Carol Concerts* were born.

The combined choirs of around three hundred voices sat behind the orchestra and I conducted the orchestra and choirs from the front. Song sheets were given out to the audience and everyone was encouraged to sing. If I thought the audience was not singing strongly enough I would stop and rehearse them without the choirs' support.

It was always a fun evening singing popular carols and Christmas songs. There were solo items from the choirs and the orchestra, sometimes with me handing the baton over to the choral conductors to conduct their choir with the orchestra accompanying. The use of the big pipe organ was always special. Santa would arrive while we all sang *Jingle Bells* and I would give him the baton to take over from me. We often would have a different Santa each year and for him to stop the orchestra and choir together was always an interesting exercise. Nothing was ever rehearsed, it just happened spontaneously. Sometimes he would have a 'fairy helper', throwing out lollies to the audience. During these free family concerts you could place a bet that a baby crying would be heard in a soft or silent part of the programme, all part of the concert atmosphere.

The Carols were always the highlight of my conducting year, seeing so many smiling friendly faces, the young and old singing their hearts out, all enjoying every moment. While the choirmaster was conducting, I would venture down into the audience, to have a listen, say hi to some of our 'followers', but mostly to enjoy the wonderful sound. More than three hundred mainly Pacific Island youth voices, one third of them male, singing at volume, with enthusiasm and energy accompanied by a full symphony orchestra, in a venue with beautiful acoustics, this needed to be heard, to be believed. Unfortunately hundreds of people are turned away each year from a capacity hall that seats around eighteen hundred people.



Queuing outside the St Marys Cathedral Auckland for an ASO Concert



Queuing outside the Auckland Town Hall for an ASO Concert

Santa and the F word

Throughout this book I have included the occasional comment and letters from newspapers or from the audience about concerts and performances.

Generally speaking I do not welcome concert reviews. A preview or interview yes, but not concert reviews. I have found that some newspaper critics or reviewers at times can be quite cruel, nasty, negative and discouraging, focusing on a small slip or indiscretion and ignoring what was actually a wonderful concert. To be honest, on the whole over the years, I personally have had excellent support and relationships with the newspaper and radio media when it came to previews and interviews, but I did make it known that reviews were not always welcome.

After one of our Sing Along Carol concerts, I received a phone call from a young female reporter representing one of our major newspapers. The newspaper had received a complaint from an older lady who was at the concert, stating that Santa had said the “F” word over the microphone at the concert. This reporter wanted to get the facts straight.

I must admit that I was a little taken back by her accusation. Our Santa, the elderly father of one of our players, was the epitome of a gentleman. He would never say anything like that in public let alone over a microphone.

I told her that her accusation was not true and that our ‘little old lady’ had misheard and that as one gets older our hearing does lose some of the top frequencies.

Our Santa had explained to the audience that Father Christmas came from the Scandinavian region of the world and that the Icelandic word for thank you was ‘takk’ (t’ah’k). So he had the audience saying ‘thank you’ to the choir and orchestra in Icelandic. Now I can understand any misunderstanding and confusion from perhaps not only our ‘little old lady,’ but reporter lady, do your homework and get your facts straight.

The reporter insisted on pursuing the topic with another call the next day even after I told her that we had not had any complaints from any other source and that I had listened to a recording of the concert to verify any problems and there weren't any. I told her that she was calling me a liar.

“Oh no! I just want to get the facts right for the record.”

“There are no facts to get right. You are taking her word against mine therefore you are calling me a liar.”

I was getting quite angry with her persistence and asked her why she did not look at the positive side of this free concert; the pleasure that was being given to such a large audience by an orchestra of 80+ and choir of over 300, who all give their time without payment in the spirit of Christmas. Why not consider writing a positive newspaper article on all the local brass bands and church choirs who go carolling, even the Salvation Army and charity groups who all do their bit for Christmas?

She asked me if she could listen to the recording, to ‘put the record right’. I kept telling her that there was nothing to put right. She was not going to hear the recording and I would use it in evidence after I had ‘sued the pants off’ her personally and the newspaper if they printed anything defamatory.

The next weekend, the Sunday newspaper, page two, one third of a page, photos, big bold headlines, ‘Did Santa say the “F” word at the Carol Concert?’

The article was actually very well written and there was not a lot, if anything to complain about. Mostly quite complimentary and our reporter lady had done some homework.

Interestingly enough I had not mentioned my ‘discussions’ with the reporter to the choir or orchestra and I never received any comments about the published article from anyone. It certainly makes you wonder if anyone read it or took it seriously.

I rang the reporter up the next day and congratulated her on a well-written article. She was quite surprised with my phone call, a bit taken back and I suspect relieved that I was not about to sue



Santa takes over the baton and Gary slinks off with the Auckland Symphony and Combined Church Choirs, at an Auckland Town Hall Concert



her. I told her that I had a big open-air concert in two months time and she should come and review it.

“What is going to be so special about this concert?” she asked.

“I am going to do a ‘down trou’ during the concert.”

There was a stunned silence for a brief moment and she replied, “You are joking?”

“Lady, if the only way I can get a third of a page article in the local newspaper is by doing something controversial, then I will do it. Goodbye” and I hung up.

The outdoor concert was cancelled. Perhaps that was just as well.



The Auckland Town Hall

ACT 2 (Scene 1)

Moments with the Auckland Symphony

There have been many magical and special moments in my conducting career.

One such occasion was at the Auckland Town Hall, back in October 2000, while conducting my own orchestra in concert to a large, capacity audience.

After completing the programme, as per custom, the conductor comes off stage, grabs his breath and sometimes a mouthful of water, returns to the podium to acknowledge audience applause and response, the orchestra's performance, receive flowers (sometimes, not always), take extra bows and even perform an encore. I usually give the audience an encore. This time I was greeted off stage by my stage manager telling me there was someone going to come on stage and make a speech. This came as a big shock, especially when you are totally focused on the concert and job in hand. I turned, returned to the stage to be welcomed back and greeted with a fanfare from my Brass section. There on my podium was a magician entertainer friend of many years, microphone in hand, waiting to present me with the prestigious Variety Artists Club of New Zealand Scroll of Honour. This was one of the few times in my life when I was completely lost for words. Not like me at all not to find anything to say. I knew nothing about it. It was an overwhelming surprise for me. How they kept it a secret I will never know.

A similar event happened a few years later, in 2005, at the Bruce Mason Centre, in Takapuna, Auckland, when at the end of the concert, the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International named

me a Paul Harris Fellow. The organisers went to great lengths this time. A Power Point presentation was screened behind the orchestra on the cyclorama, while the speeches were being made. Where did they 'dig up' all those old photos of me? Embarrassing, but what an honour – and I had no wind of this either. Once again I was completely lost for words. Those in the Orchestra already in the know, did well to keep this event secret from me knowing about it. But then again I don't always tell them what is going on.



Some of the unexpected occurrences are minor but do add a little flavour and colour to the concert, like pink gloves being handed to me by my concert master just as I am about to conduct the *Pink Panther Theme*, with stuffed pink panther soft toys popping up and down amongst the orchestra; funny hats being given to me to wear; a flag or two to wave; or my enticing an unsuspecting member of the audience onto the stage to conduct a short piece of music.

At one concert, during *Star Wars*, Darth Vader, appeared at the back of the orchestra complete with light sabre. He just stood there and made his presence felt. A stagehand, I suspect.

The Phantom has appeared while I was conducting music from *Phantom of the Opera*, on more than one occasion, usually at the back of the orchestra. In one performance I was using the cathedral organ and the organist entered to play, dressed as the *Phantom*. Was I forewarned? Of course not!

Once, three men danced across the stage in gym skirts, during *Three Little Maids From School*, from the *Mikado*, yet again. Nothing this time like my three old ladies. Once when a group of men, in football gear, danced the *Can Can*, unrehearsed.

I have used a Spanish dancer in the *Bohemian Dance* from *Carmen* with style and effect on more than one occasion. She danced through the orchestra, but this was rehearsed.

Then there is the beautiful *Blue Danube Waltz* and, for those who have not seen the Danube, it ain't beautiful and it certainly ain't blue. Perhaps the river was blue when Johann Strauss II composed this music and beautiful the music is, so much so, audiences all around the world love it. Sections of the orchestra



*I was only joking when I said
"If you are going to play like that you may as well all go home!"*

find it quite boring to play and this includes my viola section. It was the violas' turn to set up the seating on stage for the first 2001 Sunday afternoon concert of the year. They had all had breakfast together beforehand, something that had become quite a ritual for them on the day of the concerts in Auckland. The beautiful *Blue Danube* was obviously discussed and the plot thickened. As I walked into the concert hall early, I found the stage all ready to go, vacated except for the entire viola section sitting in the empty auditorium, practising their, “___, pom, pom, ___, pom, pom, rest, play play, rest, play play,” parts of the *Blue Danube*. I was lost for words, yet again.

Orchestra rehearsals can sometimes become a little tense, especially if the rehearsal is not going according to plan and time is short. On one of these occasions while rehearsing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, the first clarinet started the low trill, 'slid' up the scale passage and as the orchestra joined in went into the *Teddy Bears' Picnic* followed by the pianist 'crashing in' with the opening chords to the *Grieg Piano Concerto*, à la Gerard Hoffnung, to laughter, surprise and aghast looks from the players. What could I say - it broke any tension and the rehearsal went well from then on.

During the orchestra's very early days we rehearsed in a Synagogue. A central chandelier dangled by a rusty chain over the viola section. There was always the worry that if it fell, it could have taken out the whole section in one hit, but before we had a chance to test the theory, the ASO moved its permanent rehearsal venue to a large school hall. This was a place that was very easily accessible by motorway, with ample car parking and storage for our percussion instruments and considerably cheaper to rent.



The first few terms of rehearsing, saw us experimenting with the hall's acoustics by setting up to face each of the four directions. We settled on a wide layout, facing south, with the violins and

woodwind near the stage. The trombone section always settled under the second fluorescent light batten in the back row, near the kitchen. Occasionally, we would alter our seating layout to make room for other performers like choirs or dancers.

The night in question was in the early '80s. We had altered the orchestra's seating layout 90 degrees left to make room for a group of children who were going to perform modern dance with us at our next concert. The orchestra was backed up against the stage, leaving the kitchen end available for the dancers. Mid-practice, with the dancing in full swing, the orchestra hit its loudest note of the night and the back row's second fluorescent light batten came loose from the ceiling. It hit the ground, exploding bits of glass tube all over the floor. The children had been dancing barefoot, but were able to stop where they were. They were carried to clear ground by their parents and orchestra members. Although dancing had been taking place under the spot a few seconds earlier, everyone was clear at the time, as was the trombone section on this night. Nothing else has ever come loose and I've glanced up at the replacement lighting batten many times on rehearsal nights for almost the next 30 years. They were lucky children and a lucky trombone section.

I could probably call this 'The Case of the Flying Fluorescent'.

Lights have been known to fall from the lighting rigs in theatres and concert halls, but fortunately have not caused any injury or damage when I have been involved.



Conductors have to be careful when shaking hands with the soloists. Sometimes I forget that I have a strong handshake.

This happened once and I emphasise only once, during one of my concerts. The young female solo violinist walked on stage and as per custom, shook hands with the conductor - me. As I took her hand, I heard a painful groan, felt the slackness of her hand

and saw the pained look on her face. Too much pressure there, Gary! I could only stand there and feel her agony and suffer with her as she tried to compose herself in front of the large audience. I had this sick feeling in my stomach. It was a little difficult to apologise to her in this situation. The silence seemed like an eternity. Luckily it was her bowing hand. You could hear a pin drop as the orchestra waited patiently for my downbeat, unaware that I had hurt her hand. As I raised my baton, a small voice from the audience called out, “That’s my mummy.”

We all cracked up with laughter, soloist, orchestra, audience and me. How could you not? The tension was broken, and believe me, the Mozart *Third Violin Concerto* had never sounded better. Of course I apologised after the concert and we had another good laugh.

I now shake hands with caution and yes, we are still good friends and she has performed again with the orchestra.



I am often asked questions about my baton, my little white stick.

Most conductors, I would imagine, have their own preferences as to weight, length, style and material that it is made of. I know some conductors who like real short batons. I personally prefer a lightweight, fibreglass stick, with a cylindrical cork handle. I don’t like ball handles, plaster or wood. I find they can slip out of my hand and I could spear an orchestra player. As for length, I cut the tip off so that my baton fits inside my music case. Nothing too fancy or special, just ones that have the length and weight I have got used to.

As batons can be a lethal weapon, I file the tip so that it is rounded and not sharp. Conductors have been known to lose an eye, clip themselves in the face and ear. I still have a scar on the palm of my left hand where my baton pierced the skin and stuck in my palm. “Now I want all up-bows, please – ouch!” as I talked and

demonstrated. That happened some 20 years ago. The scar still remains as a reminder. I remember one conductor who threw his baton at the orchestra.

Exchanging my baton for something else to conduct with can happen, especially in Family or School concerts. I have been known to conduct with flags, sticks with things on the end, dish mops, an umbrella (*Singing in the Rain*) and chopsticks to conduct Chinese music. All this goes hand in hand with the funny hats I have had to wear and conduct in. There was that Mexican sombrero, the silly orange Scottish wig and Tam o' shanter, the ten-gallon cowboy hat, a Chinese or pirate hat, a British Proms Union Jack and an Irish wig. The list goes on. You name it - if I can hold it and use it, I use it. Conductors are performing seals anyway.

Batons are sometimes 'souvenired' even from the conductor's podium. There was one concert in Dallas, Texas, where my baton disappeared from my hotel room and I ended up conducting the concert (which was held in the hotel convention centre), with a white hotel ballpoint pen. These days I rarely leave my baton on my music stand. I take it with me as I do with my scores.



Being a composer and arranger myself, I have no qualms about making changes, edits, cuts, additions, enhancements, whatever you want to call them, to any piece of music.

Sometimes there are passages that are extremely difficult, some parts unplayable or out of the range of the instrument, or parts that just do not work in today's musical world. So why exclude a piece of good music from your programme because a few bars do not work. Edit or compromise the offending bars. The audience will not know anyway and it does make life easier for the orchestra players. Some string parts, especially the inner parts, can be fiendishly difficult. Why cause the players unnecessary stress, when it is not really that important?



I am sure that the great composers would have revised their orchestrations and compositions if they had had the opportunity to hear their music performed. I speak with authority here, as a composer who has had the fortune of hearing my own music performed, recorded and the opportunity to re-write and revise after hearing it. Most of it I have conducted myself and made changes at rehearsals, often on the advice or suggestions of the players.

Many famous composers never heard their music performed in their lifetime, so a revision or correction opportunity was never available to them. When I source material for printed programmes I often feel very sad when I read that the composer died before he heard his work performed. After twenty years, *Prince Igor*, with its famous *Polovstian Dances*, by the Russian composer, Borodin, remained unfinished at his death and was completed by his Russian composer friends, Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. Borodin never heard it performed. *Carmen*, the opera by French composer, Bizet, was a flop in his lifetime. The *Pearl Fishers* suffered a similar fate. Bizet died a broken man, never knowing the success of *Carmen*, which came just a few months after his

death. It was not until 1992, after Saint-Saëns' death, that *Samson and Delilah* was finally performed in Paris.

Changes to the music and individual parts, in a recording session, are common for me when I hear things that I know could sound different. Not only different, but also better. Of course this means that after the recording session there is a massive time-consuming, rewriting process of all the parts that alterations and where corrections have been made. That is, if you want your music performed again in concert or by other orchestras.

It is hard enough for a composer to get his music performed once. It is even harder to get a second performance and it can be a little stressful sometimes for a conductor if the composer is at a rehearsal or a performance. We all want to do the correct thing and play it the way the composer intended it to be performed.



As I have sat down to write and think about the many little 'happenings' that have occurred in the past, the memories just keep coming, generally completely unrelated.

I was rehearsing *The Wasps Overture* by Vaughan Williams. For the final chord it is marked *fffppp* with a crescendo up to *fff* and a final accent last note. For those who do not understand musical technicalities, these are markings for dynamics. *fff* means very, very loud. *ppp* means very, very soft. Crescendo is getting louder.

I could never get the orchestra at rehearsals to play softly enough or loudly enough for my liking, so I resigned myself to accept what I was getting from them. On the concert performance, when the orchestra got to the final chord of *The Wasps*, after a very fine performance, they must have all thought, 'now, Gary wants us to play loud then soft and crescendo to loud again here,' and that they did. I will never forget that wonderful experience of hearing and seeing the surprised look on some of the player's faces, as the volume of the orchestra dropped to almost nothing and then rose to an almighty stirring sound.

I do remember the first performance of my composition *Concert Overture-Youth of Auckland*. My orchestra had worked hard on rehearsing my new composition and they openly acknowledged that they liked it. The first chord was fortissimo, ('hit it hard') and the orchestra did. I felt the weight of the sound hitting me in the chest. It moved me backwards. It was not just the volume, it was energy that I experienced, energy that the players had put into the performance. An orchestra can give a correct performance without any mistakes but if the performance is without energy, the performance can be dull, boring and lacking in personality.



In many ways, the podium is a Command Station for me, but I am not always in complete control.

Sometimes players and conductors can get distracted for various reasons, from flashing cameras, audience noise, talking, calling out, late arrivals, the list goes on. Getting distracted in any way can cause momentary loss of concentration, resulting in the loss of the place in the music, the counting bar rests, whatever.

I was conducting the *Moldau*, by the Czech composer Smetana, as the opening piece on the programme. We had only gone twenty or so measures into the music when a late arrival in the audience distracted me, causing me to momentarily lose count and place on the score. The woodwind are playing scales all over the place representing the rushing waters of the river, leading up to the big theme. Not a good place to lose your way without a good reference point and I needed to bring in the 'cellos, like soon. So, I did, they smiled at me and ignored me, I was two measures early. Thank goodness for rehearsals. They were counting and not distracted. Not a serious mistake but nevertheless, one that had never happened before and should not have happened.

I was conducting my orchestra in a performance of British music to celebrate an anniversary of the British Monarchy. The concert was being held in our new Anglican Cathedral in Auckland. In true British form, we were to start the programme with *God Save the Queen*. I entered and made my usual introductions of the

orchestra and myself, welcomed the audience and introduced the first piece on the programme, Sir William Walton's *Coronation March Crown Imperial*. I turned to the orchestra and the leader of the second violins whispered to me "What about *God Save the Queen*?" Of course, silly me, I thought. Who needed a score to the *National Anthem*? Perhaps just to remind me to play it?

So I look in the direction of the percussion section for the drum rolls at the beginning. They are standing there with their arms folded and just smiling at me. Why do they always smile at me when I 'cock up'? I can read their faces. They are saying, "And what do you want?" After a few seconds, that seemed like forever, with gestures passed back and forth, I get my timpani and snare drum roll. Of course, in the meantime, most of the orchestra have put the music to *Crown Imperial* on their music stands. When they hear the drum roll, panic strikes, as music is quickly changed. I did lengthen the drum roll a little, quite a little.

Since that time, if I ever play *God Save the Queen* I indicate a drum roll as I walk on stage to the podium without the orchestra standing for me.



Conductors can sometimes have difficult parts to conduct.

For some unknown reason, I was having trouble with a few bars in the Tchaikovsky violin concerto. At the final rehearsal I was informed by the front desk leaders, "We don't watch you there. We follow the soloist. It's safer not to watch you. Your down beat seems to get on an up." I soon sorted that out. They are honest.

I overheard one of the violin players commenting to another about how difficult a section was and he replied, "Oh don't worry about it. Just keep your bowing going the same way as the leader!"



Orchestras, musicians and bands can often have a reputation for being hard drinkers. This fortunately was not the case with my orchestra. I personally had a 'no alcohol' ban, eight hours before a concert. This can sometimes be inconvenient especially when there is a Friday evening concert followed by an after concert reception and a Saturday morning concert.

Many of my orchestra members will remember the 'mulled wine' after concert function parties that were held at my place, after our Sunday afternoon concerts. The string players were usually the 'stayers' and there were many stories to be told, perhaps in another book.



I was once asked if I knew all the players' names in an orchestra. In my own orchestra of course I know their names. I used to be a schoolteacher so I appreciated the value of doing this.

In orchestras that I guest conduct I rarely get to know any of their names except for the management, concertmaster and soloists. At rehearsals I would refer to them by the instrument they play. A common language can always be a problem with foreign orchestras, English is not widely spoken. There have been many times when I would have loved to have sat down with some of the players and talked with them over drinks and a meal. Often I have had an interpreter sitting in at rehearsals. Perhaps this is why foreign orchestras always refer to their guest conductors as Maestro. That way the players don't have to learn new names and pronunciations all the time.

I must say that the orchestras I have conducted have looked after me very well, without exception, by way of friendship, luncheon and dinner dates, even to organising touristy things for me to do in their city.



Gary accepting flowers from a young admirer

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ACT 2 (Scene 2)

A Night at the Opera

On some occasions when a large choir is involved, I team up with a choral conductor.

This happened when I conducted a series of performances in Auckland's Aotea Centre: *A Night at the Opera*, *A Night on Broadway* and *A Night at the Movies*.

These involved a large choir and due to the limited stage space, I placed the choir in front of the orchestra with the choir conductor 'shadow conducting' with me: the words to all songs were projected on a screen above the stage and the audience invited to sing with us. In fact, most of the audience are there for a big sing-along. As conductors, we can play off each other and we watch each other like hawks and it works very well. I have used this method many times when performing with an orchestra and a large choir and it gives the choir conductor the opportunity to perform in the concert and not feel left out - especially after all the hard work and effort that they will have put into rehearsals. It also means that an orchestra known to play loudly and enthusiastically at times may not drown the choir out.

Together, in concert, we would rehearse the audience with or without the choir, then walk around the audience encouraging a 'better' audience participation and performance. Fun evenings they always were.

Orchestras and choirs expect the conductors to know the score and the music, making their intentions clear and to give clear signals. This includes consistency with tempos. On one performance of *A Night at the Opera* I really 'took off' with the introduction to the *Anvil Chorus*, at a tempo far too fast and I am thinking, "They will never be able to sing the words at this speed." So after a few bars,

realising my error due to momentary lack of concentration or distraction, I stopped the orchestra, turned to the choral conductor and said, “Would you like this a little slower?” “Yes please, that would be most helpful,” was his reply. Sometimes the audience may think things like this are prearranged, but not generally. We are just covering up our little indiscretions.

At another performance of *A Night at the Opera*, I turned to the choir behind of me and there was no conductor, so I raced down and waved my hands in front of them. At the end of the piece, a voice on the radio microphone boomed out over the speakers, “Gary, if you are looking for me, I’m up here in the dress circle recruiting members for my choir.” We could bounce comments off each other at ease and we did. We worked well together. “Have you found any?” “There are quite a few good ones up here. They need some persuasion. Please carry on without me,” which I did with big smiles all around.

I have found that the audience love to sing along and be involved but only in the right setting. I couldn’t imagine the audience singing along in a Mahler programme. Sometimes members of the audience get quite embarrassed when the conductor comes up to them and tells them they are not singing loudly enough. Some will turn the volume up as you approach them. One lady told me go and get back on the stage where I belonged and to leave her alone, but all in jest.

Our back stage production team would take every opportunity to use as many theatrical props possible, especially lighting and screen projections, very effective but not over the top. The audience were there to be entertained and have fun along with the choir and orchestra.

At a performance of *A Night on Broadway*, I walked on stage, introduced orchestra, the choir, choir conductor and myself and welcomed the audience to what would be a fun-filled night. Suddenly there was a total blackout in the theatre, including the lights on the orchestra music stands and theatre exit lights. Total darkness. For a moment there is a shocked silence, then screams

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and shouts followed by a stunned silence again as a single beam of light shines down on a man sitting at a table, right front stage.

A voice comes over the sound system. "Lot number 663."

This was the auctioneer scene from *Phantom of the Opera* by Andrew Lloyd Webber, a timely cue for the orchestra (when the music stand lights came back on) to play the overture from this wonderful musical.

For the opening *Night at the Movies* we wanted to set the scene movie style. The orchestra and choir are on stage, seated, ready and waiting. The lights dim and a single spotlight shines on the large gong with gong-striker, strategically placed high at the back of the stage. J. Arthur Rank would have been proud of us. Smoke starts pouring in from the wings as the gong is struck. "More smoke," I hear from the stage manager. "More smoke," as searchlights bounce off the haze engulfing us. The smoke machine was not working quite as it should. Then, the smoke machine starts functioning properly. "Less smoke. Less smoke," was the call. Too late she cried.

I turn to my brass and percussion section to play the *20th Century Fox Fanfare* theme. Where are they? I cannot see them and they cannot see me, as I hear from off stage, "Still less smoke. Less smoke!" The snare drums started, the brass section coughed their way in, while the rest of the orchestra groped their entries and somehow we did all end together - above the loud, huffing and puffing noise that the smoke machine was generating.

No, I had not told the orchestra and choir that the smoke thing was going to happen, so all was completely unrehearsed. It certainly added to the atmosphere and the audience loved it. This was another highly successful, fun evening's entertainment, with everyone singing along to hit songs from the movies.

The *A Night at the....* series, paved the way with a format and formula for my later highly successful, annual *Last Night of the Proms* concerts.

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ACT 2 (Scene 3)

Last Night of the Proms

The audience came with their flags, their hooters and their whistles. They sang, clapped, stood and swayed, waving their arms and flags. They dressed up, some painted their faces, the Pearlies were there, in full costume, buttons stitched all over their jackets and hats, but most of all they came to be involved, have fun and participate in a total extravaganza’.

Our *Last Night of the Proms* concerts involved a choir of 140 mixed voices singing with the orchestra at another new (at the time) major concert venue: The Bruce Mason Centre in Takapuna, Auckland.

Once again due to the limited stage space in a sound shell, as with the Aotea Centre *A Night at the Opera* series, I placed the choir in front of the orchestra with the choir conductor ‘shadow conducting’ with me. I lead from the centre podium and the choral conductor is conducting out front from within the audience. Once again it means that my enthusiastic orchestra won’t drown out the choir. Well not too much.

The Bruce Mason Centre is a lovely intimate auditorium, seating about 1000 people, and ideal for this kind of production. The auditorium is decorated for our Proms occasion, with flags, balloons, confetti and streamers. The flag waving noisy audience, appropriately dressed, whistling, hooting and singing their little hearts out, all getting involved and having fun.

As always, I present the varied programme from the podium. I make a play of rehearsing the audience singing, the blowing of whistles and the tooting of hooters.

We use PowerPoint presentations for graphics, pictures and the words to songs. Our *Last Night of the Proms* is a major production and in reality has developed into a glorified musical party on a symphonic level. Not quite like the Royal Albert Hall Proms, I have to say.

The music we perform on our *Last Night of the Proms* is British light and popular music, ranging from the classics to film and show music, pub and war sing-along songs, featuring soloists and ending with the traditional, *Sailors' Hornpipe* (with the audience trying to outrace the orchestra), *Rule Britannia*, *Jerusalem*, *Land of Hope and Glory* and *You'll Never Walk Alone*. The audience just love the Irish River Dancers, as they tap their way through the *Lord of the Dance* on the raised catwalk behind the orchestra. Those taps can drown out the orchestra at times. No need to enhance them with amplification. The music of Andrew Lloyd Webber is a must, as is *Highland Cathedral* from the Scottish pipes and drums.



The Irish River Dancers



The Traditional Proms Balloons

One person described our very first Proms evening in an e-mail:

‘Capacity audiences, all with their whistles, hooters, flags, patriotic hats, costumes and flags. They stood, they sang, they swayed and waved their flags and arms over their heads, some even danced.

When the 1000 balloons dropped from above, the audience went even wilder. Streamers were thrown. This was a real musical party. We could not help getting involved, being part of it and enjoying ourselves to the max. The atmosphere was electric. What a wonderful, exciting feeling.’

Another e-mail sent to me read,

‘Congratulations, you make it all look so easy, but I can imagine the organization with so many performers. The choir was awesome, so many voices, the orchestra superb as usual.

The show last evening was wonderful. Please make it an Annual Musical Event.’

And make it an annual musical event we did, every June since 2000.

There are probably a number of talented musicians who have the knowledge to play my musical role at the Proms. However, the non-musical ingredients are an essential feature of the success of these *Last Night at the Proms* series. As my Stage Manager has pointed out, ‘Gary has a personality that is very forthright. He obviously is technically and musically very good but as a conductor for the Proms, he is an entertainer first and a music director second.’

As always, I present the programme from the podium, as conductor and master of ceremonies you might say. After *God Save the Queen* (being very British), and perhaps a Fanfare and the obligatory introductions, I start proceedings by rehearsing the audience, the hooters and whistles, just to get them in the mood. Then it is into the musical content of the programme.

As well as first class performances, the audiences have come to expect the unexpected and the *Last Night of the Proms* provides an ideal opportunity for musical and dramatic surprises. At our very first performance of *The Last Night of the Proms*, we had just finished the first half of a very energetic and lively performance. The audience were all standing after having sung *You’ll Never Walk Alone*. Yes, I know – Americans, Rodgers and Hammerstein composed this song, but the British use it at their football games and the audience love it.

I had just announced that it is now time for interval and a coffee break, when there was total theatre blackout (sound familiar?) resulting in screams, shouts and cries from the bemused audience, choir and musicians.

Suddenly a spotlight cut through the darkness, highlighting a lonely bagpiper in the balcony, playing *Amazing Grace*. You could have heard a pin drop. Audience, choir and musicians stood with their mouths wide open, their eyes focused stage right. Now while all the attention was on the lonely piper, a full pipe

band and drum corps moved, under the cover of darkness, onto the left hand apron of the stage. On cue, the pipes and drums filled the auditorium, the lights revealing a band in full Scottish dress. *Amazing Grace* had never sounded so wonderful. Apart from the pipers and myself, only the technical crew knew that this was going to happen. People still talk about it.

Although dramatic surprises always delight the audience, I insist that nothing should detract from the music. The music is still paramount. Having said that I still believe that the audience is there to be entertained and entertain them we do.

On one of my lighter British music nights we were playing, in a *Persian Market* by Albert Ketèlbey. Lovely music, but not played often enough in concert these days. I decided that a Turkish belly dancer was required, a decision I made without discussion with the orchestra. The concertmaster was quite forgiving, as the belly dancer stroked his hair and he played along with it, but I'm not so sure about the young male 'cellist she 'made up to', as she weaved and slunk her way through the orchestra. The audience loved it. Took the orchestra by complete surprise.

Hey! It's my show.

This is a show that's not without its hazards for me. Members of the orchestra and the backstage crew will sometimes deliberately set me up. For example, at one proms concert, it was those three large hairy men yet again, as they appeared, at the back of the orchestra on the catwalk, pouncing and pirouetting during the playing and singing of *Three Little Maids from School*, to a well-earned applause. So what I thought, that has happened before, I was not surprised, almost expected it, but nobody told me that they were going to suddenly reappear and dance across the stage in front of the orchestra and myself just as I was about to conduct the next number. That I was not expecting.

Another time while playing *The James Bond Theme*, I noticed on the catwalk, two of my younger female second violinists playing up as Bond girls to a horn player. Three empty seats in the orchestra.

Sound effects can be quite common during film and show music performances, like war planes and gun-fire in *The Battle of Britain*, the *Dam Busters March*, or the *RAF March Past*. Sometimes I am told about them or asked if it is all right, but quite often not. Helicopter sound effects happened during music from *Miss Saigon*. That was exciting.

At one performance I featured a delightful older gentleman who played a carpenter's saw with a violin bow. He was an experienced entertainer and musician and I had featured him the previous year on our proms programme. A very fine musician, who transformed his carpenter's saw into a beautiful sounding musical instrument. Always popular with the audience and they would sit there, spellbound.

As he entered with his saws in a tool bag, I commented to the audience that I hadn't requested a carpenter and suggested that he may like to hand out his business cards to anyone in the audience that needed a handy man. He ignored my contemptuous comments, just smiled and borrowed the concertmaster's violin bow. At the conclusion of a beautiful performance he bowed, shook my hand, returned the bow, turned to exit and then turned back to me and said, "Boy, could you pick up my tool bag for me, please?" I was a little taken aback but complied and followed him off stage. As we reached the side of the stage he turned to me, took the bag and microphone from my hand and said, "Thanks, carpenter's apprentice."

This gentleman was to appear in my 'Proms' series a few years later as a bar room pianist in a sing-along bracket of popular British 'pub songs'. A great entertainer and 'pop' pianist and he left his carpenter's saw at home this time.

I discourage any antics before interval. After interval the orchestra dress up in tinsel, hats and British themed gear, always remembering to dress up and not down.

They are fun evenings, two performances always sold out a month in advance, but they do not always run according to plan.

At the very first performance of the *Proms* series, I tried to combine orchestra, massed choir and bagpipes for the finale, singing the New Zealand farewell song *Now is the Hour*.

Disaster struck. The bagpipes were on the stage extension to one side and seemed to have their own version of the tempo. This tempo certainly did not synchronize with the orchestra, although it had been successfully rehearsed. Were they watching me, who knows? The poor choir and audience were stuck somewhere in



*Party time at the Proms with the orchestra,
chorus and City of Sails Pipe Band*

the middle, so I gave in to the louder force, which were the pipes and drums. I stopped the orchestra and they sat that one out, although some did sing along.

This was a first and last time attempt to put together this combination, although it does work in *Highland Cathedral*, a beautiful piece of music. The pipes and drums are positioned behind the orchestra where they can see my little white stick and they do watch me, like hawks, but I do combine them only with the wind and brass sections of the orchestra.

How do I select my soloists? Here is one example.

One week out from a *Proms* concert I received a telephone call from a friend, telling me about this wonderful young couple, who had sung *All I Ask of You* from *Phantom of the Opera* at a college concert the previous night and suggested I should hear them.

I always respect recommendations, especially from friends, so I asked her to organize it for them to come to my place the following day, Sunday, for me to have a wee listen.

These two were madly in love with each other and engaged to be married soon, even though she was still at college. His mother played the piano accompaniment for them and yes, I was impressed. I told them to sing *All I Ask of You* again and this time to remember that I was the audience and not to look continually into each other's loving eyes.

What a lovely couple, young and beautiful with great, mature voices. They had both been involved in musical theatre and it showed.

So I said to them, "What are you doing next weekend?"

"Nothing much."

"Are you available for a rehearsal tomorrow evening?"

"Yes!"

"Then I guess you had both better come to my orchestra rehearsal tomorrow evening if you are to sing next weekend at my *Last Night of the Proms*."

There was silence, a stunned silence, but with big cheesy grins they asked,

"What time? We will be there. Tell us more."

They sat and listened to the orchestra and were quite fascinated, never having been to a symphony orchestra rehearsal. I handed out the music to *All I Ask of You* and the orchestra played through it to more amazement from the young couple. I suggested that they now stand on my podium to absorb the sound around them and just quietly go through the words and the arrangement with the orchestra. I stood in amongst the violas and 'cellos, the orchestra didn't need me to conduct anyway. Rehearsal went well, very well, but I had more up my sleeve for these young lovebirds.

They were to sing their one song after interval, so this is how it all panned out in the concert.

Remember the catwalk at the back of the raised orchestra on stage? The choir (seated in front of the orchestra) and orchestra are performing, *A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square*. Halfway through this lovely popular song, our two lovebirds, dressed in their street clothes, drift across the catwalk, have a leisurely look around, dance a little and drift off. No mention of them is made. Near the end of the first half it is the 'Pub' sing-along number and these two reappear, drifting in from the back of the hall and sit alongside the grand piano which is on the right side apron of the stage and join in for a while with the pianist and the singing, then wave to the audience and drift out again.

At the end of the 'Pub' scene I asked the audience, "Who were those two, does anyone know? They just appeared." My orchestra had not been told of what was going on. No one responded from the audience and I am not too sure what I would have done if they had.

After interval during the middle section where we play the songs from the musicals, I announced, "I found out who that young couple were. They were from up North, visiting us down here and they had heard that *Phantom of the Opera* was performing here. *Phantom*, here?" There was much laughter and chuckling.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome to the stage from up North, to sing for you, *All I Ask of You* from *Phantom of the Opera*...

I have seen *Phantom* a few times in different parts of the world and conducted *All I Ask of You* many times now. I have to say honestly that this was the most convincing performance I have experienced of this lovely song. The audience recognised this as well and showed their approval accordingly with sustained applause.



*Auckland Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (with shadow conductor) -
Last Night of the Proms., Bruce Mason Centre*

ACT 2
(Scene 4)
Oh those memorable
out-of-town concerts

In the early years of my orchestra when the membership was smaller, around sixty players, (and do I dare say, when we were a lot younger), we would go away for a weekend to a provincial town where a symphony orchestra is a rare event.

We would do this every two years and Rotary would organise everything and use our concerts as fund-raisers for some charitable or worthy cause.

We would not know the playing conditions until we arrived: The lighting available, type of seats, how much space etc. It did present some interesting playing situations. One thing we could be sure of was the scrumptious luncheons and afternoon teas that the ladies of the committee would organise. This made any inconveniences well worthwhile. We were banqueted like kings and queens. We also knew that our music would be appreciated and there would be a good audience turn out.

We would leave Auckland by coach around midday Saturday and travel to a town about three hours away, have a short rehearsal and sound check at the concert venue and perform that evening. Inevitably there would be the after- concert function at a sponsor's home, which usually carried on back at the motel or hotel, which we had booked out. The next morning, Sunday, after breakfast, we would drive an hour or so to another town and perform an afternoon concert, before driving the few hours back home to Auckland.

Unsuitable seating and inadequate lighting were the main problems we encountered, even though we specifically requested no plastic chairs and took some lighting with us along with our own music stands.

One venue we played in was an aeroplane hangar, with an arched wall and roof. No angles at all, which resulted in no reverberation or echo. This was a shocker. The players could hear only themselves playing, as there was no blend of sound at all. The big crash cymbals produced a ping without any splash or resonance. The big bass drum sounded like a cardboard box. Extremely difficult conditions to perform in and it was musically not a good concert, but the punters seemed to love us.

That was the Saturday night. The next concert on Sunday afternoon was in a church, a large church but it was long and narrow. So the orchestra was seated long and narrow also in the altar area. Interesting to conduct an orchestra in a formation such as this.

I didn't know until quite a few years later, there was a sweepstake going around the wind section as to how many split notes the principal trumpet would make in Khachaturian's *Spartacus*. He was a little 'tired' from the night before. I don't know how many, if any, split notes were counted.

For one of our orchestral weekends away we booked out a motel at the thermal hot pools. Now I must point out that not everyone in the orchestra wants to party or socialise after a concert. It's a cup of hot chocolate and bed for them.

Yes, some of them did swim in the hot pools till late and yes, we probably were a little loud and noisy and yes, we probably did deserve to have one of the players drive around the motel units in his car at 7.00 in the morning with the car stereo turned up to full volume, blasting out brass band marches.

I still try to avoid taking a piano soloist with us when touring to provincial towns. We can never be sure of the condition of the

pianos available to us. At one town, they had a lovely grand piano in the school hall where we were performing and the *Grieg Piano Concerto* was on the programme. The piano sounded lovely – good tone and in tune - in tune with itself that is, but a quarter of a tone flat. It had been specially re-tuned for us, but not brought up to concert pitch. We tuned the strings down for this work and the wind tried to play flat. Not a happy occasion.

At another out-of-town concert, one of my principal wind players (and let us leave it at that) forgot all his music. His wife had to drive the two and a half hours to deliver it to him. I think they are still married.



Sometimes string players leave their bows behind, or players forget their reading glasses. Bow ties get forgotten as do cuff links and bringing the wrong shirt is not uncommon. I have had players turn up to concerts with their instrument case and no instrument in it. They said they were practising! How about players going to the wrong concert venue, even turning up at the wrong time or on the wrong date? A solo tenor thought the concert was at 4.30 when it was actually 2.30. He missed his cue.

I had one brass player who couldn't find a car park and became so annoyed he went home without telling anyone. His career in the orchestra was short-lived.

We have all heard about players who attend every rehearsal and send a dep (substitute) in for the concert. It does happen. I wonder if some of them would notice if I sent in a dep for myself? Probably not. Some of my viola players also play violin. One brought his violin to a concert instead of his viola. Another viola player arrived at a rehearsal with his music but no instrument. You know about all those viola jokes?

I have known musicians and singers to leave their music folder on the roof of the car while they put instruments in the car trunk or

on the back seat, then forget about the music and drive off, never to see their music again.

On other occasions players have been known to place their instruments behind their car as they open or close the garage door and then drive over their beloved 'cello or guitar. I am not sure how they explain that one away to insurance companies.

After rehearsals players can leave all sorts of things behind, usually jackets, coats and sometimes bags and brief cases, but your violin? I rang the player concerned to tell her I had her violin safe and sound. "Oh dear! My husband would kill me if he knew." She had not even missed it. So much for her practice!

Instruments and music have been left behind on occasion at a restaurant, after the 'after-concert function' or dinner/drinks. A main worry is when music is left behind at the venue and not noticed missing until the next rehearsal. Cleaners have a habit of throwing away anything left behind, especially 'paper'. Some music is impossible to replace, because it is long out of print. If a woodwind or brass part goes missing and it does at times, it can make the entire piece of music unusable. This is because often there is only a piano/conductor score and not a full score where all the individual orchestral parts are shown and it is not possible to copy out a replacement part.

I lost a blue conducting jacket and to this day I have no idea what happened to it. I checked with the concert hall venues and possible dry cleaners without any success. I have several blue tuxedos, but because of the nature of the programmes I conduct these days, mainly popular classics and film and show music, I usually conduct in a white jacket, so it was a few months before I noticed that this blue one was missing. I keep looking suspiciously at men in the street wearing a blue jacket.

My conducting jackets are tailor-made, with more width across the back and in the sleeves, to allow more freedom of movement with my arms. The sleeves are longer also because I spend most of my time with my arm outstretched

The mechanics of instruments can sometimes falter at the most inappropriate times. Strings can break in concert and the player has to surreptitiously leave the stage to replace it, assuming they have a spare string with them, which is not always the case. I have seen 'cello spikes collapse on more than one occasion. Reeds on woodwind instruments and more frustratingly, keypads on these instruments, (which can sometimes leak air, causing notes not to play) can be temperamental, no matter how conscientious the player is about maintenance and care.

When I was a clarinettist myself, playing in orchestras, there were times when a rubber band was used to hold the keypad down until the spring could be repaired. Basically, it is the musician's responsibility to maintain his or her musical instrument, but ultimately it can be a conductor's problem in concert, which can mean the reorganising of the programme or even cutting the piece or parts of it.

Oh, the joys of being a conductor.



Review

Matakana turns out - Auckland Symphony triumphs

A family concert Accent of youth

Matakana Primary School Hall came alive with the playful wit of Gary Daverne and the Auckland Symphony Orchestra on the afternoon of Saturday May 8th.

Having missed the concert at the Town Hall last week, (and the performance at the Bruce Mason Centre in Takapuna on the 9th being sold out) I determined I was NOT going to miss this one, and it was well worth the one and a half hour drive from Auckland.

I didn't expect the big turn out – in fact, I had fears I might be relegated to 'standing room only' on the deck outside the hall. Thanks to the charity of the lady on the door, I made it inside. (Next year I'm calling ahead)

The programme, devoted entirely to our youth, was vibrant and fun. It began with Eric Coates's *Youth of Britain*. (The third movement of Coates's *The Three Elizabeths*.) I sat enthralled, with tears in my eyes, and visions of England's fatherless children of the war years going through my mind. Despite the hardships of war, there was joy and laughter.

The Children's Overture by Roger Quilter, based on children's nursery rhymes including, *Girls and Boys Come Out to Play, I Saw Three Ships, Sing a Song of Sixpence, Over the Hills and Far Away, A Frog He Would a-Wooing Go, Baa Baa Black Sheep, Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush and Oranges and Lemons*, brought to mind play grounds brimming with children and mothers bathing babies, sweet memories of bathing my own children too.

The highlight of this concert was definitely *Havanaise* by Camille Saint-Saëns, with solo violinist Amalia Hall. Intricate in parts, Saint-Saëns would be well pleased with Amalia's treatment of his

work. Amalia displayed maturity and an extraordinary sensitivity unusual in one so young. An international prize-winner at only 15, she has played with this orchestra and others frequently since age 10 as well as appearing on the first 'Westpac Young Performers' TV programme at 6. I know we will hear so much more from her in the future.

Havanaise is said to have been inspired by the 'crackling of a wood fire'. More memories of childhood played in my mind as I recalled sitting around the fireplace with my own family, watching the embers dance in the chimney and my father being the only one allowed to bring the flames back to life with the huge poker he kept by his chair. It made me warm, despite a constant breeze from the open doors. Amalia graced us with an encore – *Hot Canary* by Paul Nero. Light and slightly jazzy, the kids enjoyed its playfulness.

Fun and laughter followed as Mr. Daverne led us through a tour of the orchestra, introducing each family of instruments along the way. Henry Purcell's Rondo served well as the vehicle. It was informative for the uninitiated in orchestral music and undoubtedly inspiring for the musically inclined. Music is fun, the message well delivered.

The Overture *Youth of Auckland* by conductor Gary Daverne followed. Commissioned by the Auckland Secondary Schools' Youth Orchestra in 1986, Mr. Daverne's composition evokes thoughts of young people together - playing team sports, racing horses across hilltops, laughing, and loving life, learning - always together. It's an ideal given voice and brought to life. Conducted this time by assistant conductor Jonathon Baker.

Bob Lowden's arrangement of *Disney Magic* came next and I believe every adult present sat recalling holiday afternoons in cinemas with sniffers and ice creams, just as I did. *Zip-a-dee-doo-dah* (Song of the South), *Candle on the Water* (Pete's Dragon), *Chim Chim Cher-ee*, (Mary Poppins), *A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes*, (Cinderella), and *It's a Small World*, (Disneyland Attraction) were all included.

All fidgeting came to a stop when music from the *Harry Potter* film by movie veteran John Williams was played. Young and old alike laughed at the witchy pianist (late again) and gasped

at the HUGE toy rat. As one of the very few people who have NEVER seen a Harry Potter movie, I resolved within the first 16 bars what my Mother's Day treat would be. Visions of witches on broomsticks, villains and spells gone wrong abounded while the orchestra played and I can't wait to see the films.

We all hoped for an encore, and we got one. *THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!* Just the right note to close on, rousing, strong and still youthful after nearly 40 years.

Everyone in the hall, orchestra and conductor included, had a wonderful time. For many it was their first experience of live orchestral music and they were suitably impressed. Their chatter as we reluctantly left the hall was evidence of that. Just as our treasured childhood memories endure, this concert (which took several months to plan) will endure also.

Hopefully, with support, the Auckland Symphony Orchestra will return to Matakana. I for one wouldn't miss it.

With my regards,

Lynette



ACT 2 (Scene 5)

On Tour Overseas

In the early years the orchestra had a trip to Fiji, when around fifty players took part in the tour.

Looking back, to those early years, I believe the orchestra was not playing particularly well. An orchestra is only as good as the person ‘up front’ and I was certainly lacking in experience and technique back then, a real novice.

The Fiji trip is unmemorable except for the touristy souvenirs of wood carving masks, spears and local handcrafts we all bought. I do remember that it was too damned hot to be performing a symphony concert as the sweat was pouring off me at rehearsal in a non-air-conditioned school hall. A local Fijian Indian girl tried to sing *Summertime* from *Porgy and Bess* (Gershwin). I suspect our accompaniment didn’t help her very much, but apart from that, the entire musical content and trip remains a blur except for one concert.

It was on the Pacific Harbour Coast at a five star tourist resort hotel where a deal was set up for us to perform a relatively short lunch time concert for the guests and a scrumptious buffet banquet would be provided in return.

Play for our lunch we did. The music we played I can’t remember but the setting I will never forget. The orchestra played on a grassed area in front of a smaller raised concrete stage or platform where the woodwind and brass sat. The strings were placed on the grass. There was no covering roof or sides, but the backdrop was spectacular!

As I stood at the podium and looked past and over my orchestra, with clothes pegs on their music stands holding the music in place as it was quite windy, I could see in the near distance the deep blue lagoon with waves breaking over the outer coral reef under the cloudless blue sky. The whole picture was framed by tall coconut palms waving gently in the breeze. It was a beautiful setting. I can also remember that the contrabasses were exceptionally loud, reverberating around the hotel complex and that the audience talked most of the way through our concert. Then I could see that the rain was coming, so I lifted the tempo of the piece we were playing. We got faster and faster but finished all together and cleared the stage just in time before it rained.

I wonder what music we played? *Summertime* perhaps? The lunch was great. Oh yes, I remember we did wear brightly coloured Fijian beach shirts to play in.



The 2007 China concert tour programme consisted mainly of popular film music and orchestral favourites. We toured with a playing orchestra of seventy- six and with partners made up a touring party of ninety-nine.

On the tour, each venue presented its own unique set of problems.

One concert hall was very technically advanced with special effects equipment. Had we but known this in advance, we could have presented so much more in terms of slide shows, PowerPoint presentations, film clips etc. The stage at this venue had no need for any risers as sections of the stage could be lifted or lowered electronically depending on individual requirements, a truly amazing venue.

Orchestral seating can prove a problem. In one city with a lovely venue, the chairs were collapsible and not good for musicians to play from. This resulted in our removing chairs from the next-door restaurant for us to use on stage. Now that was an interesting

exercise. The contra bass section had to play half-sitting and half-standing – most uncomfortable.

The Shanghai concert, where the lights looked like searchlights that came out of World War I, was one of the “special” concerts in my career. The orchestra played exceptionally well to a large, near capacity audience, even with the ‘up and down’ cellos. This was due to the stage that bounced and moved.

We used the extension stage, or thrust, as it is technically called, to increase the size of the stage. This thrust, operated on a scissor system, moved up and down when you walked across it. Interesting, I thought, since this theatre/concert hall was used mainly for ballet. But then we were playing on the extension, which would normally be down in the orchestra pit.

When I conduct I have a tendency to move about and dance - a by-product of my rock ‘n’ roll years, especially with anything rhythmical or jazzy. In Asian countries, I was frequently referred to as the dancing conductor.

In this instance, as I started to move on the podium, while conducting, the stage went up and down, as did the ‘cellos, so much so that they could not play with comfort. The strings were going one-way and the bows another. I was told to ‘take it easy’. I did for a while, then, I think they got used to the spongy stage.

But the real highlight of this concert was that Channel 9 Television, recorded the concert using six cameras, for a one-hour prime time viewing, broadcast one week later on Sunday evening to an estimated viewing audience of one hundred and forty-three million people.

Having watched the programme on TV, I still find it hard to comprehend seeing myself conducting my own orchestra, the Auckland Symphony, playing musical arrangements of mine and conducting my own composition *Youth of Auckland*, to such a vast audience in a one hour programme. A hundred and forty-three million – that can only be in China. The programme producers played the main theme of *Youth of Auckland* as the ‘play in’

第五期

麦杰钢琴城之约

**2007奥克兰交响乐团
首次访华演出**

时间:2007年4月14日(周六)下午14:00
地点:中日青年交流中心世纪剧院
(亮马桥燕莎友谊商城东面)

小提琴手童安玛莉(Maria Tong)

音乐总监
Gary Daverne O.N.Z.M.

theme music after each commercial break. Oh yes, they had many commercial breaks as with most countries, but in Chinese of course. This was a real buzz in itself.

I wonder how many European or Western conductors and composers have had the thrill of experiencing this.

Again while on the 2007 China tour, I was an invited guest to a State dinner function the evening before the concert. This was not silver, but gold service. Everything was gold or gold plated. Even the chopsticks were gold. The evening involved many speeches, toasts and much alcohol consumption, usually in the form of three glasses at a time, 'straight down the hatch'. Your personal 'girl in attendance' dressed in traditional Chinese costume, stood behind you and continually kept the small but lethal glass full of 50% proof alcohol. After the formal speeches were over the drinking ritual continued and with little food having been eaten, and I not a great consumer of alcohol, the effects were showing. The food was something else, exquisite and expensive, like shark fin-soup and sea cucumbers.

Now there was one Deputy Mayor who spoke adequate English, who insisted on introducing me to everyone, with of course, the customary toasting. I tried to switch to wine but he was persistent that I stay with the 'fire water'. I jokingly told Mister Deputy Mayor that he might need to conduct the concert the following evening if I had much more to drink. He smiled and I told him he 'would keep.' Apparently I told one of the dignitaries that he had drunk too much, because his face looked blurred!

I later found out that these important people fake the drinking and many a pot plant is watered with alcohol.

Anyway, the lasting effects were minimal - nothing that a good night's sleep didn't fix - and the next evening's concert was great. My orchestra played very well and there was a large, appreciative audience, including some former ASO players.

It happened at this concert, (like all of the China concerts) that there were presentations on the stage at the end of the concert, in

front of the audience. Who should be getting a presentation, to my surprise, but my drinking friend the Deputy Mayor!

It is great and certainly an advantage working with your own orchestra and players that know your unpredictable and spontaneous nature. Quietly and quickly I told my concertmaster, “*Star Wars*.” As I turned and made the presentation to the Deputy Mayor, I can still remember the horrified look on his face as I held his hand firmly, took his arm, handed him the baton and marched, or should I say, dragged him to the podium saying, “Remember last night?” My orchestra knew exactly what I was about to do and were ready for anything. I quietly told him that he would now be conducting the *Star Wars March*. “Oh no! Not *Star Wars*,” he replied, the last words he ever said to me. I left him standing in front of the orchestra on the podium and went down into the audience and watched the fun.

I have found that the audience like to have a conductor mingling with them, especially me, with all the ‘wool’ I have on my face. Asians have very little body hair and have always been intrigued by the ‘wool’ on my arms and face. Some even venture to touch and pull the hair on my arms or stroke my bearded face.

So, with a typical politician’s confidence, our Deputy Mayor gave a downbeat and *Star Wars*, all three minutes of it, was underway. I suspect he had some musical knowledge. He followed the orchestra with style and accuracy, bowed with grace, acknowledged the orchestra, smiled and shook my hand at the end with not a word said.

Well done, Mister Deputy Mayor. The audience loved it and he certainly did his political career a big favour. Probably he will be voted in as Mayor at the next election.

I often ask and question myself as to why after so many performances of a piece of music – often over one hundred performances, I can still ‘stuff up’. Nothing too serious, just not getting it all quite right. The audience would rarely notice. I always strive each time for a perfect performance. I know it is easy to say, “you are just being human.” If I were driving a car I would have a few dings and scratches – no crashes but dings. It is

interesting the number of times an orchestra can save a conductor. I wonder how many conductors would admit to that?

Most of my ‘dings’ have occurred during the encores – but I will come back to that. I think distraction (for whatever reason) and lack of concentration are the reasons for my dings. As a conductor I never hear all the good bits the orchestra plays. I am always on the alert for the danger areas, e.g. time and tempo changes, difficult entries and pauses. If I stop to listen and enjoy the music being played – oops – disaster can happen. It’s like driving a car and taking your eyes off the road to watch the scenery.

During the violin concerto, on this China tour, I missed cueing the woodwind for four measures; they needed their chords placed with the soloist (one of the few times the players really needed a conductor, they told me). Where was Gary? He was committing the unthinkable! Enjoying the beautiful sound and music the young violinist was making.

Interestingly enough, I never even noticed the mistake until I was questioned about it over dinner by some of the woodwind players, who managed to fake their way through.

“What four measures did I forget? Oh those four measures. Sorry!”

The main consequence is for the soloist, who is playing from memory. The players are reading well-rehearsed music and generally they will ignore any conductor’s error. When something different happens, a soloist can think they are in the wrong place, missed a section out, have a memory lapse, whatever. This soloist was momentarily concerned but did not panic and there were no hiccups.

I told her I owed her four measures and would add them into the next performance. She smiled. I know what she was thinking. “..... Gary!”

I must digress a little and tell you how this young soloist came to my attention.

As mentioned, soloists and talent are usually chosen by referral, a recommendation from someone I know or an orchestra member. Sometimes also by default, as was the case with this young girl violinist, whose elder sister realised that she was unavailable as my soloist, a few weeks out from the concert.

The conversation went something like this:

“Sorry, Gary. I will not be able to play the Sarasate, *Gypsy Airs* at your next concert. I forgot. I will be in America.”

“Great! Now what do I do? The concert is in three weeks.”

“My young sister can play it.”

“Really? How old is she?”

“Eleven.”

“You are joking? Who is her teacher?”

“Me.”

“I don’t believe all this. I will want to hear her play.”

“Fine. Tomorrow afternoon?”

I rang around my musical contacts to check this young girl out. Replies were like, “I have never heard her play. I hear she is very good. Even better, some say, than her sister.”

All very comforting I must say. Three weeks out from our concert.

Anyway, the next afternoon Mum and her two daughters arrived at my place. Mum and the younger daughter said little. Big sister was in complete control.

“Do you have a piano accompaniment available?”

“No!”

“Never mind, I will read it from the conductor’s score.”

Now I hate that, when a violinist can accompany, on the piano, from a conductor's score. Makes one feel a little inadequate.

So the kid sister, knee high to a grasshopper, takes out her pint size violin, gives a down bow and the sound is sooooo big. Wow! I have auditioned many an instrumentalist, but this was something quite different for me.

This was one audition I enjoyed and she played all the music from memory.

She was eleven at the time. She won the hearts of the orchestra and the audiences. Since then she was a regular soloist and showstopper with my orchestra, a lovely, talented, young lady and beautiful to work with.

She was seventeen when I took her as our soloist on the ASO's 2007 China tour.

This was Amalia Hall. Today she is widely recognised as one of the foremost young violinists to emerge from New Zealand.



I do not allow players to bring handbags of any description on to the stage during a performance. The orchestra members always enter the stage in sections and at the same time. I personally do not like the look of orchestra players, or choir members, drifting onto the stage like 'Brown's cows'. The audience always applauds as the orchestra enters the stage when the stage manager says, "Ladies and gentlemen of the orchestra, the stage is yours."

Our concert uniform does not have pockets and during the 2007 China tour, one of my violinists had a large number of coins on her. This well-endowed lady did not want to leave them in the dressing room, so she stuffed her coins down the front of her bra. All was fine until the end of the concert when the orchestra stood up to acknowledge applause. The coins spilled out onto the stage.

We had heard stories that if the audience liked your performance, they could throw coins on to the stage. I don't know if this is true or not, but some of the other violinists did and thought that the audience were throwing money at us and started scrambling to collect the coins off the stage floor. So here she is, sitting first violin, outside desk in full view of the audience and all caught and broadcast on China's National Television. She won the *Golden Cleavage* award.

The China trip was memorable not only for the tourist attractions and concerts, but also from an instrumentation point of view. On this tour we hired the larger percussion instruments, a harp and contrabasses. We had absolutely no idea of the quality of the instruments we were hiring which would be provided at each venue. Generally they were in good condition but in one city the instruments were not in good shape at all.

One of the contrabasses had strings flat against the fingerboard. With Kiwi ingenuity, wads of cut up cardboard were wedged under the bridge. That did the trick! The harp had a string missing. They did leave us a spare harp string but it is not like stringing a guitar.

As for the percussion instruments, well! We were provided with timpani (Chinese woks in disguise) that would not have been out of place boiling up rice in the local restaurant. The tuning pedals on the timpani had seized up and needed to be masterfully tuned during the concert, to the three possible notes, with the assistance of a 10-inch crescent spanner (which I think was left in China).

Our mistake. We had asked for percussion equipment, not 'working percussion equipment.' A 'toy' drum kit was among them. Requested items were not there, like a real drum kit. There was a good snare drum though. It was just as well we did take with us some of our own percussion instruments. I was very thankful for a very skilful and adaptable percussion section that could make the drum set and other equipment sound much more expensive than they were. The drum throne was made out of cushions borrowed from the concert hall foyer. Re-shuffling the programme helped the percussion section. Thank you, guys and we did have fun.

This concert was so popular that the scalpers were trying to sell tickets to members of the orchestra!

Our linguistic skills were greatly improved. We learnt how to say “Hello, “goodbye”, “No I don’t want to buy a ticket to the concert thanks, I’m in the orchestra,” or extremely helpful phrases such as, “Is the food on my plate supposed to be moving?”

One coach trip, travelling between two cities, was interesting. Someone at the Chinese end had forgotten to order a truck to carry our luggage and instruments. The result was eight ‘cellos and suitcases, stacked down the centre aisle of the coach, which gave rise to the expression, ‘cello-surfing’, to describe how the passengers reached their seats

For many it was a once in a lifetime experience. They came, they saw, they conquered, new friendships were forged, they learned new skills such as how to read a street map in Mandarin at three in the morning, or how to negotiate their way out of buying ten Ralph Lauren polo shirts when they only wanted some bottled water; or wanting to use a toilet, drawing a picture to explain and being shown the plumbing section of the department store, or managing to escape the staple diet of celery, corn and rice by finding the best noodle houses in China. By all accounts it seems the players showed the kind of curiosity, adaptability, inventiveness and intrepidity, that makes every journey a memorable and worthwhile experience. I wonder how many of the dozens of ‘copy’ watches we bought are still working? I have a couple that are, but I do know of ones that stopped before they got to the end of the street. Some of the members discovered the delights of staying in hotels with fewer than five stars. Apparently the leader of the second violins didn’t just lead the seconds on the concert stage but also enjoyed leading the way when it came to doing the shopping.

After one concert in Shanghai, a Mum sent her young son backstage to meet me and to explain to that his mother wanted to cook dinner for me that night. I guess her English was not that good. “Sorry kid! I’m on the train out of here in four hours.” I wonder what her cooking was like?

China, whilst being the toilet design capital of the world, also has everything on offer for those in search of fine wine, original cuisine or a rare strain of salmonella. It was a wonderful tour, the people were friendly and welcoming; it was a great cultural exchange.

Achieving this most exciting and successful tour to China in 2007, sharing our music with millions of Chinese people in famous Concert Halls and broadcasts on TV, marked this venture as one of the best years in the orchestra's life.

On our return from China, we performed two concerts in Auckland titled, *China Revisited*, playing some of the music we presented on the China tour. Towards the end of the second concert, one of my first violins presented me with a Chinese hat to wear and a pair of chopsticks to conduct with for the remainder of the concert.



*Gary and high-ranking dignitaries
at the Cao Jun Art Museum opening, Wuxi, China,
where Gary was a VIP guest speaker. May 2011*

ACT 2 (Scene 6)

Outdoor Concerts

Outdoor concerts can draw audiences of tens of thousands.

In my younger years while playing in brass bands, most of our performing was outside and in my rock 'n roll years, many concerts we played were in makeshift sound stages, or outside at the beach and holiday resorts.

The largest audience I have ever conducted in front of was an audience in excess of 200,000, in 1996 at an outdoor concert held in Christchurch, a southern city in New Zealand.

This annual outdoor show time spectacular was entitled *Classical Sparks*, an event held in the City's major park. It featured their own Symphony Orchestra with solo vocalists, in a programme of popular symphonic and vocal music. Large video screens were erected either side of the temporary stage with big speakers relaying all the happenings on stage. A TV personality presented the show from the stage.

Under a star-filled, clear sky on a warm summer's night, the audience sat on the ground, on blankets, cushions, or folding chairs and brought their picnic delights with them for a fun, family, musical evening, the crowd stretching for hundreds of metres. When I first entered the stage I just stood on the podium and marvelled at the sight and sound before me. I acknowledged the sustained applause, turned and faced the orchestra and waited. I waited and waited for the noise to subside. Of course this did not happen. There was a continual buzz of sound. So I just raised the baton and away we went into the first piece of music. Once we were underway the crowd noise was lost for me as the sound of the orchestra took over. At one point, in between items, I heard some young people sitting on the grass in front of the stage chanting, "Gar-ree. Gar-ree. Gar-ree. Gar-ree." Quite nice, I thought.

With all the excitement in this sort of concert atmosphere, tempos can sometimes, shall we say, get faster. I can remember the horn section coming off stage at interval and commenting about the *Ride of the Valkyries*. “Wow! That was exciting to play.”

This was a very well organised concert with an experienced, competent, technical crew and it was a special occasion for me, as this orchestra rarely used a guest conductor for this event. Their resident conductor was unavailable for this one. Lucky me. What made this one of my concert highlights was the sheer enormity of it. All the music played was fine without any ‘majors’, but the size of the audience of all ages, enjoying themselves and listening to a symphony concert, now that was really very special.

I have conducted outdoor concerts on a much smaller scale, with youth orchestras and many with accordion orchestras. Some instruments are suited to outdoors, but generally not strings. I have learnt not to accept conducting outdoor concerts, especially those with orchestras, but sometimes it is unavoidable.

Orchestrell '95 was an outdoor concert where I conducted a top London orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. For this three-hour concert, a two-and-a-half hour rehearsal was scheduled prior to the concert. Scary stuff! This was a big programme of popular classics, including the *1812 Overture*, which I had never conducted before.

Sometimes you only have enough time to ‘top and tail’ pieces of music. That is rehearsing the beginning and the ending, with any unusual or difficult parts in between.

So how did I get to conduct this London orchestra when I lived in New Zealand?

Throughout this book I have deliberately avoided using or mentioning names for reasons I think are quite obvious. We all know that it is whom you know not what you know to succeed. However I feel that I must mention one person by name. This one particular woman had a major influence on my musical journey – her name is Jenny.

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(ALL MAJOR CREDIT
 CARDS ACCEPTED)

She was the conductor and administrator of one of the top Accordion Orchestras in England. I met her through the accordion world and it was she who was instrumental in my being invited to conduct this top London symphony orchestra. I will talk more about Jenny when I talk about accordions.

As her two sons were playing members of London orchestras, she had the contacts and while I was visiting in England, she arranged introductions for me so I was able to have access to the music libraries of those orchestras. One particular librarian shared an office with the orchestra's general manager, an Australian woman. While talking with the librarian about the possibility of borrowing some of the orchestra's scores, the orchestra's GM came in and was introduced to me. For me to be able to make an appointment with this woman would have been a near impossibility and here we were just chatting.

We chatted for a while about her orchestra and her background and my own musical achievements, although not very great at this stage of my life, but I made them sound good. She seemed genuinely interested, perhaps because we both came from the same South Pacific region of the world.

I asked her directly, "So, what are the chances of my conducting your orchestra?"

She looked at me for a moment and then responded, "Every chance in the world. When you return to New Zealand, I will email you with some proposed dates and programme."

True to her word, she gave me the option of two dates. Arrogantly, I replied that I would take both of them. "Cheeky bugger," was her typical Australian response. "You can have only one date."

I accepted this offer but said I wanted one of my own pieces included in the programme. "What sort of piece?" "A *Pocket Overture*, four minutes long."

She agreed and several days later I received the programme that included my composition along with Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*.

1812 Overture is a popular number but it does contain moments that can cause anxiety for a conductor, especially as inexperienced as I was back then. In retrospect I was blatantly cheeky to even consider conducting such a major orchestra at this stage of my career. When the reality set in that I was to conduct one of the top orchestras in the world I was scared stiff.

As a conductor, I always study each of my scores with considerable care. For the *1812* I not only went through it meticulously but I also discussed areas of potential difficulty with my concertmaster and also rehearsed it with the ASO, explaining to them the challenge that I would be facing in London. Their efforts and comments on some of the more challenging passages provided me with an increasingly valuable insight into the piece.

Entitled *Orchestrell '95*, this open-air concert was programmed for a Saturday evening in Christchurch Park, Ipswich, north of London, with the two-and-a-half hour rehearsal scheduled at 3.00 pm before the concert.

On arrival at the venue in preparation for what was to be a three-hour concert, somewhat nervously I expected to spend a lengthy rehearsal period with the orchestra. My nervousness increased



*Christchurch Park, Ipswich, England venue for
Orchestrelle 95 with the Royal Philharmonic*

when I saw the players arriving in dribs and drabs with the result that the first chords weren't sounded until 3.30. A 20-minute coffee break was also scheduled and consequently the actual rehearsal time was whittled down to about two hours.

But this was a top London orchestra and any initial nervousness I might have had subsided as the concert got underway. It became very clear to me that I had at my command a group of musicians of the highest calibre, even if they did play behind the beat. This took a little getting used to and this was my first experience of an orchestra playing behind the beat.

I am a down beat conductor from my television days as conductor of the studio orchestra, where we used to record to a 'click track' and my down beat was right on the click beat. Many conductors are up beat conductors with orchestras playing behind the beat.

My accordion conductor friend, Jenny, had accompanied me to this outdoor concert and just as I was about to step onto the podium she said to me words that I have remembered and quoted many times.

“Take it seriously but not too seriously. Have fun.”

Fun I did have, with some interesting experiences and moments of anxiety, I guess one could say, on that podium.

In the dreaded *1812 Overture*, there is one part where there is a whole four beat measure with the strings coming in on the last quarter note. I was advised by experienced players to only give two counts, as someone will always come in early. I explained to the orchestra what I was going to do and when we got to this part in the concert only the front desk of players came in on time, after the two counts. By the next bar, the whole section was there. Apart from that, it wasn't too bad to conduct after all. I have conducted the *1812 Overture* several times since without problems.

In a flute solo from *Carmen Suite*, the flautist played an F natural instead of an F sharp. She smiled at me. I smiled back. No sense in frowning, this might have upset her even more. Musicians do not like letting themselves down and people do make mistakes.

Half way through Johann Strauss's *The Blue Danube* there was a fireworks display going on with lots of hissing and popping. The noise was so loud one could hardly hear the orchestra. We got to a part in the music where there is a pause before we return to the main theme. I put my hand up and stopped the orchestra. They waited for me. When the banging and popping of the fireworks ended, I gave a downbeat and the *Danube* continued to flow.

You know that you are in control when you can do this and the orchestra is watching and on your side.

At the end of the concert, after the final number, I was appalled to see the orchestra packing up, in front of the audience, while the applause was still happening. There was no way that I could present an encore, with contrabass and timpani covers on, woodwind and brass packed up, the whole orchestra ready to make a move - a move to the car park, to beat the audience to their cars and the roads home. I hadn't even finished taking my bows and accolades. The orchestra didn't seem to show an interest in these. Concerts have always been more than just a job for me.

The success of the concert was summed up by a review in the *Local Daily Times*. Under the headline 'Concert Lives up to its Spectacular Billing' the writer began by referring to the occasion as 'a well-orchestrated treat for the thousands who turned up'. The photograph of me, baton uplifted and eyes popping with concentration, showed my commitment to a concert that included many popular classics included other than those already mentioned: *Night on a Bare Mountain*, *Scheherazade*, *The Thieving Magpie Overture* and of course my own composition, *Pocket Overture*.

The *1812 Overture*, for which I was an apprehensive conductor and had initially rehearsed 20,000 kilometres away with my own orchestra, was, as the reviewer wrote, 'always going to be the climax and the orchestra, conducted by New Zealander, Gary Daverne, did not let the expectation down.'





Christchurch Park, Ipswich, England venue for Orchestrelle 95 with the Royal Philharmonic

I actually hate outdoor concerts and avoid them if possible. Lighting can be hopelessly inadequate. Engineers seem to always want to light from the front, so the audience can see the players, but this light shines in the players' eyes and casts a shadow on their music. When players look up to see my beat (and they do sometimes) they get a blinding spotlight in their eyes. Not good. It also reflects off my balding head. Back lighting - what is that? This is not only a comment about lighting outdoor concerts; inside auditoriums can be just as frustrating - every concert, same venue, same problem.

The sound for outdoor concerts is generally 'enhanced' and controlled by someone who calls themselves a sound engineer, who has little experience with symphony orchestras, who is rarely familiar with the programmed music you are playing and has different ideas from mine as to what the balance of the instruments should be and how it should sound overall. I seem to have continual confrontations with young sound and lighting engineers who think they know it all.

Having said all this, in the summer of 2007, a month before the Auckland Symphony toured to China, we played a wonderful outdoor concert in an olive grove at Matakana, a small wine growing and farming region, one hour's drive north of Auckland City.

Everything was as perfect as one could ever hope for. A warm summer's evening, a beautiful setting with the orchestra playing in a sound shell built across an artificial lake set in the rolling grassland hills. The audience of around twelve hundred, some with picnic dinners, sat on blankets and folding chairs amongst the olive trees enjoying the warm, still, cloudless night for a programme of popular symphonic music, presented as *Stars Under the Stars*.

On this occasion we were blessed with experienced, mature sound and lighting engineers and the result was one of success and satisfaction. This was a job well done, without complaint or criticism. Thank you team.

Prior to the concert though, it had been rather adventurous carrying musical instruments up and down the steep grassed paddock several times, from sound shell to dressing rooms and back, especially after dark.

We did receive one complaint, however, from a neighbour some kilometres away, that it was all too loud. Remember we are out in the middle of farming and wine-growing country. Not a house for miles. The noise control people arrived and we were three decibels over the legal limit. I told my percussion section to tone it down just a little. There is always someone who is difficult to please. The complainants had actually been offered complimentary tickets to the concert.

They declined.

This, however, was still another very special concert for me, although not without technical problems. Every concert seems to have its problems. It can be the lighting, the sound, acoustics, too small a stage, unsuitable chairs for the players (quite a common one) and in this case, the sun.

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This was an outdoor evening concert and during the late afternoon sound check the sun moved around to the West and shone straight onto the stage, making it impossible to play because of the heat and glare from the setting sun. The string players were afraid of damage to their instruments, and rightly so. The start of the concert was delayed until the heat went out of the sun and the sun had sunk lower on the horizon. Nevertheless, when we started playing most of the orchestra members were wearing sunglasses and could not see me because of the sun. Do they watch me anyway, I wondered?

Stars Under the Stars was divided into three acts and featured some of New Zealand's fine young emerging talent and one of our leading divas. The First Act was mainly popular orchestral and film music, Act 2 music from the theatre, and the Final act, mainly popular music from opera.

The first two acts went without comment, only to say great performances and those pink gloves turned up again in the *Pink Panther Theme*.

The unexpected always seems to happen and it is not always bad.

During Act 3 our lovely diva was singing at her best. She had the audience with her all the way. She talked to them and they loved her. This was the first time that we had worked together, but it was a very comfortable performance. Then towards the end of the performance she wandered off-stage unannounced, telling me "I will be back". We all watched and waited. Our diva returns with a large piece of card with the words to the next song on it and tells the audience "I don't usually sing requests from conductors but Gary asked me to sing this one, a favourite of his, and I am going to: *Song to the Moon* from *Rusalka*."

I took that as a big compliment.

Now this song was supposed to be the final item in what was a selection of famous soprano opera arias. Our diva, at the end of the song, decided to then tell the audience all about the opera. When she finished she looked at me and said, "Oh dear. I shouldn't have done that. I suppose we had better sing the encore now."

So, we did, *Summertime* from *Porgy and Bess*.

The audience loved it all, the bows, the flowers, the hugs and the kisses. The emerging artists took their bows and accepted the accolades and applause, as did the orchestra and myself.

We are all standing off-stage wondering what to do next, as we had performed our one and only prepared encore and the crowd was calling for more. I made the executive decision to repeat *Summertime*. However in the meantime, the stage manager, on the other side of the stage, had given instructions for the orchestra to leave the stage.

Communication breakdown.

As Diva and I walked back on stage, the concertmaster and deputy had got up from their seats and were leaving the stage. Our diva went chasing after them, grabbed the deputy by the arm and dragged him centre stage to take bows and then sat him back down in his chair. The concertmaster was standing bemused at the back of the violins when he was also chased by our diva, dragged centre stage and re-seated in the front desk of the violins. Both played along very well, accepting the limelight and being told what wonderful musicians they were.

I then announced that we would play *Summertime* again, much to the horror of some of the wind players, who had packed up for a quick get-away.

This concert was, a ‘concert to remember.’ The small township talked about the *Stars Under the Stars* concert for months.

Thank you Malvina. You are very special.



ACT 3 (Scene 1)

The World of Accordions

My involvement with the world of accordions changed the direction of my musical life, for which I am truly grateful. Who knows what path my musical career would have taken if I had not met up with the accordionists.

I have always believed that the type of personality you have is reflected in the music you prefer and instrument you play. Accordionists already have their ‘backs to the wall’ because of their chosen instrument so they tend to be outgoing, fun loving positive people, always ready to get up and perform.

For years my accordion friends had been trying to get me to publicly acknowledge the fact that I like the accordion. My response, “I love the people who play the accordion, not the instrument.”

Today, I find myself as New Zealand’s most prolific arranger and composer of music for the accordion.

In 1988 I was in New York to conduct a performance of *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*, a composition I was commissioned to write for the accordion.

Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra was premiered in Auckland the previous year and in the first two years received 36 performances worldwide, most of which I conducted myself.

The hardest thing for any composer is not getting the first performance but achieving the second. I have been very fortunate



*Mary Tokarski in rehearsal with the ASO at the
Auckland Town Hall*

over the years with my original compositions, in getting many 'other' performances. *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* has had well over a hundred concert performances worldwide with several recordings made and has even been chosen as a competition test piece.

At an interview with the New York Times a reporter asked me, "How is it that a symphony orchestra conductor like you became involved with accordions?" My answer was straight and simple. "Come to the after concert function." He understood. He noticed that I was carrying an accordion for one of the younger players and commented, "You wouldn't see our Lenny doing that," referring to Leonard Bernstein.

So how did I meet up with them and get so involved that they became so influential in my life? It was at a time when I was a top musical arranger writing for Television New Zealand. The story goes something like this.

There was a knock on my front door back in 1983 and a man and a woman in their early thirties greeted me.

"We are the Directors of the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra and we are looking for an arranger."

"Who sent you to me?"

"TVNZ. They said you would be the best man for the job."

"I'll kill 'em! Sorry. No!"

"We will pay!"

"No! Go away. I am too busy and I don't even like the accordion. Goodbye."

At this point I was about to shut the door, but the man had his foot in the way.

Boy! These two are persistent, I thought to myself, serious stuff here.

It was then that I made ‘the big mistake’. I invited them both in to have coffee and discuss what they wanted. I use the word mistake quite flippantly. How was I to know that these two would become some of my closest friends and their influence on my future life unbelievable?

I told them I knew nothing about the accordion.

“I have one in the car.”

“Damn!”

“I will show you a few things, like switches and tone colours. The use of the bellows, those things which produce the sound.”

“Do I have to? Do I really need to know all this? These are my charges per bar and I want payment in advance.”

“Not a problem.”

What they required from me was an arrangement for the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra, a youth orchestra of twenty-three performers aged fourteen to twenty three years. The directors were looking for a fresh new unique sound.

I knew nothing about the accordion or writing for it, but I learnt quickly, especially about the use of the bellows and switching. I wrote in the only way I knew, as if arranging for a small concert orchestra in ten parts, two players on each part and using single notes in the right hand. No chords or the use of the left hand. This gave me a clean sound without any overtones, something that I did not appreciate initially. There was a bass accordion and with the use of switching, right hand notes could play an octave (eight notes) lower to get ‘cello parts, or an octave higher for piccolo notes. Switching could also change the tone or double up notes at the octave. There was also a percussion section in the orchestra.

So I wrote, they paid and came back for more arrangements for me to write. I asked if these arrangements were all right and they responded that they were fine. No problems. I had learnt from all my years as an arranger and musical director for Television, complimentary comments about your work were unusual. You were expected to do good work and acknowledgement of this was that you got to write arrangements for the next week's recording session. If you did get a compliment like "Your arrangement of such and such wasn't too bad this week," you knew that it was 'one of your better ones'. I found it difficult and still do, to work in what I considered a negative environment. Compliments can go along way.

Anyway, I wrote music extensively for the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra for several years, including composing some original songs, without ever hearing a note of what I had written for them. I wrote the only way I knew, not realising that I was actually creating a whole new sound in the world of accordion orchestra music.

Then, in 1986, I was offered the opportunity to travel with the accordion orchestra to Europe. This was to be my first physical involvement with an accordion orchestra and the start to a whole new musical career for me.

Initially I knew nothing about this orchestra. I had neither heard nor seen them perform locally, but I had heard glowing reports of them and that they were one of New Zealand's best-kept 'musical secrets.'

They must have been good as Air New Zealand had given them sponsorship, their logo, name and colours for their uniforms.

The Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra was in fact formed in 1976 (then called the North Shore Accordion Orchestra) and toured overseas extensively, every two years, accumulating nine International Goodwill Concert Tours, its history beginning with a three week concert tour of the U.S.A. The orchestra's objective was to extend the hand of friendship through music, the

international language, presenting a lively program of popular, traditional and classical music while promoting New Zealand as a country of great beauty and genuine hospitality. The New Zealand Government on three occasions recognised their contribution to international friendship and understanding and honoured these fine young musicians by appointing them New Zealand Cultural Ambassadors. The orchestra performed for British Royalty and at the closing of the 1990 Commonwealth Games before a crowd of 35,000 people.

So it was at the stopover in Hawaii, on our way to Europe, that I first heard the accordion orchestra when they performed at a major shopping centre. As I was the orchestra's arranger/composer, I thought I had better go and have a little listen and hear what I had written for them in the past three years,

This was my first time to actually hear any accordion orchestra. I was blown away. They were good, better than good. What an act. They were stunning, and performed without using any printed music. They all played by memory and some of my writings were not that easy to remember. I was never told that they were to memorize the music I wrote; perhaps I would have been a little gentler on them if I had known. What a great sound. All those rave comments about them that I had heard were truly justified. I asked the Directors if they had changed any of my arrangements to make them work. They replied, "No! What you hear is what you wrote." I was actually impressed with what I had written.

This European tour was the 4th International Concert Tour taking in Hawaii, Germany, Switzerland, and England. Twenty-two concerts were performed, receiving highly complimentary newspaper reviews and many standing ovations. The unique sound I had created for this orchestra, with the fascinating blend of reeds, drums, glockenspiel, organ, synthesizer, percussion instruments and voices, was a sound that never failed to appeal.

It was a fun time, with much great music performed, meeting wonderful people and visiting amazing places. It was a camping holiday as well, so along with their accordions and

sound equipment, they took tents and all the necessary camping equipment, travelling by coach.

For the concerts, one of the directors operated the sound desk. He was a champion accordionist in his own right. During the concert, on cue, he would leave the desk, go on stage, borrow an accordion from one of the orchestra members and burst into *Flight of the Bumble Bee* as a solo item. He would do this every concert, perform two or three solo items, no warm up, straight into the pieces, then back to the sound desk. Now this also impressed me and I don't impress easily. I thought to myself, this guy's good.

I knew through conversations that the accordion world was trying to blend their music into the symphonic world. I guess, move away from the 'folk' image of the accordion into the serious 'classical' world of the symphony orchestra. I had recently composed for my own orchestra's principal trombonist and performed with my orchestra *Rondo for Trombone and Orchestra*. I was asked if I would compose a work for solo accordion and symphony orchestra as a commission hence the birth of *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*.

I was in the fortunate position of having my own orchestra to rehearse and try out any new compositions.

The rehearsal would be recorded and afterwards, sitting down at home with the soloist, we would listen to the tape and analyze what I had written. We would then make changes, add to and correct what we didn't think worked. Then it was back to the same procedure at the next rehearsal, handing out the amended orchestral parts to the orchestra. There were times when I omitted to call back in the previous week's parts and at the next rehearsal, the orchestra would love it when I would say, "Take out last week's copy of *Rhapsody* and please tear it up, now." Sadistic they were sometimes. I didn't want to have incorrect copies 'floating' around. By the time we got to the first performance date, *Rhapsody*, after so many revisions, was as close to perfect as one could get it. I think this is why the work became so popular.

Gem of the Kaipara was another commissioned work, this time for Solo Accordion, Strings and Percussion that I composed and rehearsed in a similar fashion. I say again how lucky I was as a composer to have my own orchestra to try out new compositions with.

On the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra's 5th International Goodwill Concert Tour in 1988, to Australia, Singapore, the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong, I toured with them as the orchestra's arranger/composer and guest conductor. This was my first opportunity and experience of conducting an orchestra outside of my own native New Zealand. At each concert I conducted some of my own original commissioned compositions for accordion.

After performing extensively at the World Expo '88 in Brisbane, Australia, the Orchestra received the significant honour of being the first foreign accordion orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, a country where the accordion is one of the most popular instruments and very much an instrument of the people. In China, we performed full concert programs in the Beijing and Shanghai Concert Halls, each fully televised, as well as concerts in Xian and Canton, the tour concluding with several concerts and television appearances in Hong Kong.

We visited accordion factories and heard performances by local accordion orchestras some of which had up to 300 young players performing. Some of the players were so small that their feet would not touch the ground and their bodies swayed to and fro, in synchronized time. The young girls, quite unashamedly, would hitch their uniform skirts up, high above their knees so that they could sit and play their accordions comfortably. Everything was learnt by rote including the melodic wrong notes in the arrangements. Something that stuck in my mind was that the audience never stopped talking and was eating throughout the performances. Perhaps times have changed now, I hope so.

I will always remember seeing a young player sling his accordion, without a case or cover, over his shoulder and hop on his bicycle and pedal way.

It was a privilege for me to conduct in the famous Shanghai Concert Hall, an honour I was lucky enough to repeat eleven years later in 1999 with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

The Shanghai Concert Hall was built in 1930 and although designed by Chinese architect, Fan Wen-jiao, it adopted the traditional classical European style and is one of the most famous architectural and cultural heritage sites in Shanghai. It boasts excellent acoustics, which I can vouch for. In order to make way for a highway, the hall was relocated in 2007. It was moved just 66.4 metres east, rotated 90 degrees and lifted 3.4 metres and re-opened on 26 September 2008. I re-visited this stunning concert hall in 2007 and again in 2011 at the Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships.

As a footnote to China, flying the Chinese airways was an exciting adventure in itself and several of us bought the T-shirt reading, “I Flew China Airways and Survived.”

I travelled as the orchestra’s ‘guest conductor’ on all the remaining biennial International Goodwill Concert Tours, conducting mainly my own compositions: *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*, *Caprice* and *Pocket Overture*.

The 6th was an American tour, beginning with a guest performance at the Accordion Federation of North America’s annual Music Festival in Los Angeles and then travelling through the States of California, Nevada, Utah and Arizona, performing twenty-two concerts.

The 7th International Goodwill Tour, two years later; saw the orchestra perform in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Northern Italy. Their 8th Concert Tour, performing in Niagara, Albany, Mt Vernon, Manhattan, Staten Island, United Nations, New Zealand Embassy in Washington, Hershey, Harrisburg, Boston, Hudson, Saranac Lake and Toronto. For the 9th International Goodwill Concert Tour the Orchestra returned to perform in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Many of the names of the towns and venues have become blurred over the years, as there were so many 'one nighters'. The one thing that does remain in my memory is that the tours and concerts were all highly successful and receiving one, sometimes two standing ovations was 'the norm'.

We played in some major concert halls throughout Europe, America and China. Sometimes we performed in hotel convention centres, local halls, shopping malls and theme parks such as Disneyland and SeaWorld. There were open-air concerts in village or city parks, town squares, holiday resorts and even in the ruins of a 13th century castle in Austria. I do, however, recall some of the concerts that were cancelled such as on one occasion we were playing in a lakeside park in Italy and the wind 'got up' so strong that chairs and sound equipment were blown over. There was a time in Germany when we were playing in the medieval town square of Mainz and it started to rain - and I mean it 'bucketed' down. Not so exciting when you are using power for sound systems. I have never seen the orchestra disassemble and load equipment and instruments into awaiting vans so quickly. Plugs, leads, contacts, midi units, and accordions were all dried with hair driers and the concert that evening went without a glitch.

There was one outdoors evening concert in Linz, on the banks of the Danube that had to be cut short because the temperature dropped to near zero. Those poor 'tiny hands were frozen' and this was supposed to be summer. It actually rained for most of this European concert tour.

We had a concert in Geneva in 1986, not long after the Rainbow Warrior 'bombing' episode in Auckland, 1985. (The French bombed a Greenpeace ship, the Rainbow Warrior and it sank while moored at the wharf killing a crewman.) Except for the handful of concert organizers, no one else turned up for the concert, it was boycotted. So we performed for them alone and it was perhaps one of our best concert performances of the European tour.

After my 'stint' with the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra, I backed away from local accordion orchestras for a few years, to concentrate on my own Symphony Orchestra and guest conduct foreign symphony orchestras, but I still remained involved with overseas accordion orchestras, both arranging music for them and guest conducting, mainly in America and Germany.

In June 1993, I was awarded Life Membership to the New Zealand Accordion Association Incorporated.



Accordions can be a nightmare to travel with. They are heavy, some weigh around the 20k mark. Airlines can be very difficult to deal with and quite unsympathetic about them. Because of their weight, accordions can get damaged easily. No matter how many 'fragile or heavy' stickers you put on the cases, the airport handling crew can drop them. On one flight with the accordion orchestra, we watched in horror as the accordions were unloaded from the plane and dropped a metre on to the awaiting trolley. Yes! There were some casualties and the airline takes no responsibility. There was another instance where we watched the accordions loaded onto the top of a van and without even tying them down the van drove off. There was that 'sinking feeling' in one's stomach but fortunately none were damaged.

There was one occasion where I had taken an accordion soloist with me to perform *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* with a regional New Zealand community amateur orchestra. The accordion got damaged on the flight to this provincial town so there was some programme rearranging to be done. We overcame this problem, but *Rhapsody* was the loser.

To my surprise the world of accordions opened the door for me into the professional world of the symphony orchestra. Up until that time the only professional orchestras I had conducted were the television studio orchestras and musical theatre orchestras.

My first overseas professional symphony orchestra was with the Turkish State Orchestra of Adana in 1994 and a performance of *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*. I took Harley Jones with me as the soloist. Remember that man on the sound desk, that I wrote Rhapsody for? That was Harley. The Turkish State Orchestras of Bursa and Istanbul were to follow.

Language can often be a problem but is not insurmountable. I speak only English and I really do have a problem trying to grasp other languages. They find my Kiwi accent fascinating but sometimes a little difficult to understand, even when they can speak English. Generally there is someone in the orchestra of a foreign country who has studied in America or the U.K. and can speak English, or there has been an interpreter available. I refer to music reference points, as letters of the English alphabet, A for apple or Auckland, B for banana, etc., words the orchestra can be familiar with.

At one rehearsal in Adana, while rehearsing my *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*, G & J sounded similar. Half the orchestra started at each letter. The first 24 bars were musically the same. The orchestra was steaming. At bar 25 they went in two different ways – very funny. My first unofficial introduction to this Turkish Orchestra, which rehearsed in the Concert Hall, was for me to walk on stage, stand on the kick rail, which decided to break and I was sent sprawling into the empty seats in the front row. Fortunately, my pride was the only injury.

The Turkish State Orchestra of Adana was small, young and enthusiastic. I was, a few years later, to conduct the Turkish State Orchestra of Bursa where the concertmaster was originally a first violinist from the Adana orchestra. One of the Bursa French horn players I was to meet in later years playing in the Istanbul State Symphony.

It is always a pleasure and reassuring to see familiar faces in a foreign orchestra.

T . C .
K Ü L T Ü R B A K A N L I Ğ I
ÇUKUROVA DEVLET
SENFONİ ORKESTRASI

Şef
Garry DAVERNE
Solist
Harley JONES "Akordiyon"

KONZERTMEİSTER
Azad SALMANLI

Adana
Büyükşehir Belediyesi
Konser Salonu

25 Mart 1994 / Saat: 20. 00
26 Mart 1994 / Saat: 11. 00

What both these, at the time, recently formed, young orchestras lacked in experience and numbers, was more than made up with their youthful enthusiasm, energy and the desire to co-operate and perform to their best. I have found that some of the long established orchestras can have certain complacency about them, sometimes finding it difficult to change or break old habits, especially with new or different musical interpretations.



Harley Jones

Politics can sometimes become involved with music. While conducting in Adana, Turkey was having its general election. The orchestra management instructed Harley and Me to stay in doors that day and not to venture onto the streets. Just in case. They didn't want an international incident.

During one of the performances in Adana, there was a total blackout with a power failure. We were in the middle of playing the *Carmen Suite* by Bizet and it was interesting to see how long the orchestra performed without lights before coming to a gradual

halt. Lights appeared from everywhere, in the form of matches, cigarette lighters, candles and one or two torches. I was not sure what to do here. I asked the players to stay seated, as I didn't want anyone to get hurt in the dark, but of course they did not understand me and moved offstage to have a 'ciggie'. Lights were off for about 10 minutes then after a quick tune up, *Carmen* was on her way again.

And what do I remember mostly about Bursa? I did premier my composition *Gallipoli – Rhapsody for Trumpet and Orchestra*.

There was no air-conditioning in the rehearsal venue so I frequently had to change my shirt as it was dripping wet with perspiration and secondly, teaching some orchestra members how to do a Haka, a Maori war chant. They had seen our All Black Rugby team perform it on TV.

And what did the local newspaper critic have to say?

Bursa State Symphony Orchestra,
Bursa Concert Hall,
Conductor: Gary Daverne
Trumpet: Erden Bilgen.
May 16, 2003

The world premier of the Rhapsody titled "*Gelybolu*" (*Gallipoli*) composed by New Zealand composer and orchestra conductor, Gary Daverne, for trumpet and orchestra, reflected the composer's Anzac feelings and in the memory of the war took place between Turkey and New Zealand.

The message given by Atatürk after the war containing humanism and friendship is still commemorated by the ANZACs with a great importance every year.

The Turkish trumpeter Erden Bilgen, who met the composer in Auckland, New Zealand, interpreted this piece. It became formalized with the composer's visit to Gallipoli 3 years ago and a subsequent meeting between the two in Istanbul.

When we analyze the piece as a whole, we observe the meeting of the main theme with the rest, repetition of particular sounds giving it an aspect of a special piece.

It is a piece of sensitive feelings, bringing the orchestra and the trumpet in perfect harmony, enriched with melodies reminding us of John William's film music.

The composer has avoided themes that are full of sadness and mourning. The insertion of the folk song, *Canakkale* somewhere in the piece, did not harm its general harmony and gives to the *Rhapsody* another charm for the audience.

The music portrays the emotions of the young ANZAC and Turkish troops summoned to war on Turkish ground and expresses a strong desire for peace. The *Rhapsody*, with an opening trumpet fanfare, traditional Turkish folk themes, its swinging rhythm and an impressionable solo cadenza, was much appreciated by the audience.

The concert went on after the mastering performance of Erden Bilgen, a great performance of our orchestra as usual and completed by the *Overture: Light Cavalry* of Suppé, *A Night on a Bare Mountain* by Mussorgsky, *Polovstian Dances* by Borodin, excerpts from Andrew Lloyd Weber's named *Phantom of the Opera* and the *Lord of the Dance* by R. Hardiman.

Pokarekare Ana, the Maori love song, was given as an encore.

Standing ovations, happy musicians and an enthusiastic audience concluded this unique evening.

Mrs. Yelda Nihan Özmütlu
Art Critic
14 05 02

ACT 3 (Scene 2)

Other Accordion Orchestras

As I mentioned previously, I have deliberately avoided using or mentioning names (for what I still think are quite obvious reasons) unless they had a major influence in my musical life. Jenny was certainly one of these. Remember when I conducted the top London Orchestra at *Orchestrell '95*? Well it was Jenny who told me to, "Take it seriously but not too seriously. Have fun."

She was the conductor of one of the top Accordion Orchestras in England.

One morning, like just after midnight, the phone rang. It was Jenny and some of her accordion girls travelling down an autobahn in Germany phoning me on her mobile. I was in New Zealand with a twelve-hour time difference.

They had just won an accordion orchestra competition. They were all excited and wanted to know if I would compose a piece of music especially for their accordion orchestra. In my sleepiness I agreed. When I woke in the morning I kept thinking, was all this for real or was I dreaming. A phone call to England confirmed that it was, for real.

I composed a piece of music for them called *Caprice* and they went on to win the British Accordion Orchestra Open Championships with this music. *Caprice* was originally composed for two pianos and had proved popular at concerts in and around Auckland as *Duo Caprice*. I was short on time, so I reworked, arranged and renamed it for accordions, later to arrange it yet again, this time

for full symphony orchestra under the retitled, *Portrait of Ponsonby*, Ponsonby being the district in Auckland where I live.

I had first conducted Jenny's orchestra a few years earlier when they performed my *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*.

After the success of *Caprice*, I was asked to write another composition for them, this time a short work which I titled *Pocket Overture*.

Jenny described the work as 'a miniature overture, similar to a pocket containing many treasures, as in little goodies collected over a period of time. It consists of several snippets of melodies and rhythms from the composer's other compositions'. This was the work, re-orchestrated for symphony orchestra, which I conducted in the *Orchestrell '95* outdoor concert.

I conducted the premier of *Pocket Overture* with their accordion orchestra at London's Royal Festival Hall in 1993, and later that year, this work was to be awarded first prize in the American A.T.G. (Accordion Teachers Guild) 31st annual competition for original composition.

I will always remember the London premier of *Pocket Overture*. The accordion orchestra was on stage and I was off stage, nervous but all psyched up to conduct in the famous Royal Festival Hall. The compère made my introduction and just kept talking about me for what seemed longer than the piece of music. All I wanted to do was to get on with it. The performance was successful and my little overture was well accepted.

There were to be a few more occasions when I would conduct this very fine British accordion orchestra.

Thank you my dear Jenny, accordion conductress, for the influence that you have had on my musical life.

The other accordionist name that I have previously mentioned is Harley Jones. Harley was one of the Air New Zealand Accordion

Orchestra directors who initially approached me for arrangements and the one who asked me to compose a special solo piece for him, hence, *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*. Harley was another major influence in my musical journey, as he was with many other accordionists and musicians. He was always positive, encouraging, forward thinking, with many entrepreneurial ideas. The Internet and web sites were a pet 'love' for him and he designed many a site including the original Auckland Symphony Orchestra site and mine. Please check mine out at www.garydaverne.gen.nz. You will find there online all my music, both sheet and recorded.

Harley and I travelled extensively together all around the world, he with his accordion and me with my little white stick performing *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*. There were over thirty performances of *Rhapsody* in the first year, many with accordion orchestras in America and Europe, but also with symphonic orchestras. It was Harley who accompanied me to perform with the Turkish State Orchestra of Adana. There were four recordings made, one with the Auckland Symphony, one with the New Zealand Symphony, another with the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra and one with a German accordion orchestra, with Harley as soloist. There was a recording made of *Rhapsody* in Belgium and released on CD using a solo synthesizer instead of an accordion and accompanied by a wind orchestra. *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* is one of the most played New Zealand compositions on National Radio.

Now here was a moment for me to best forget. During a 1990 German radio broadcast recording session in Stuttgart, Germany, of my *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*, I was feeling so sick that I spent most of the set up time stretched out on the seats in the auditorium, waiting for the call-up to conduct and literally wanting to die. Being sick has never been on my agenda and in thirty-six years I never missed a rehearsal with my own orchestra, but this time I had just flown in on a long flight, twenty-six hours, from New Zealand, developing a nasty cough on the plane, plus quite some jet lag. I was not in good shape.



Slovenia

The orchestra and soloist Harley played well, the recording was fine but without a lot of help and inspiration from me, I must add. All I wanted to do was go to bed.

It was interesting that the German accordions were tuned to A440 and Harley's accordion was tuned to A442, the pitch that I always tune my orchestra to. There was nothing that we could really do about it except perhaps changing Harley's accordion, which is not a good idea. I am not too sure how many people would have picked it, but even in my 'sad state' I noticed it.

In 2008 I went to Slovenia where I was a guest conductor and tutor at an accordion summer music school. Slovenia has the word "love" in its name and this aptly describes the country and the people. I was to conduct in the programme, seven minutes of my music, *Pocket Overture* and my arrangement of *Orange Blossom Special*. A (s)lovely friendly young group of accordionists from the surrounding countries attended, all wanting to learn and give their best. We performed concerts in some beautiful baroque halls and churches; even if the acoustics were indifferent it was an experience to be remembered.

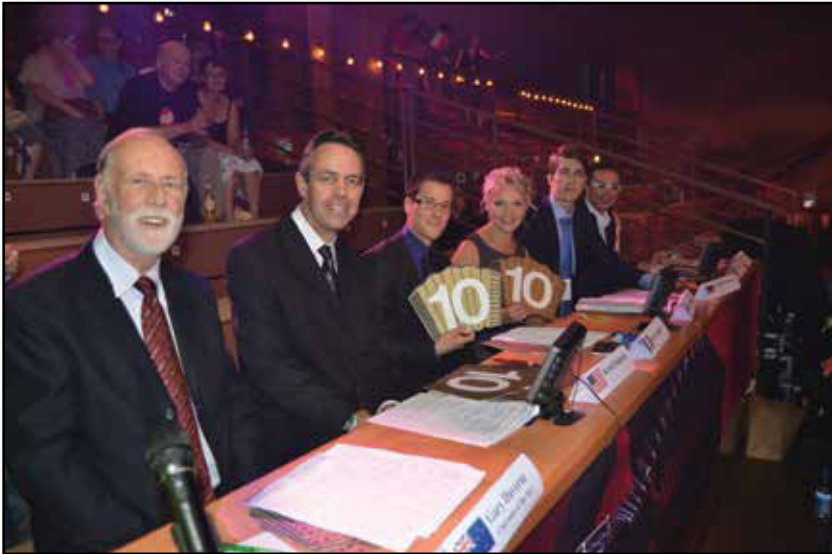
Some accordionists have the habit of 'fiddling' on the keys when you are trying to explain 'things' to other players. It can be very annoying and distracting and as a conductor you have to be firm on not allowing this to occur. There was a Croatian boy, perhaps late teens, an excellent player with an above average technique. During rehearsals he would not stop his 'fiddling' no matter how many times I told him to stop. It got to a stage where others were starting to demonstrate their technical abilities as well, so I 'threw' him out of the orchestra.

This devastated him and certainly was a surprise to the other orchestra members. I was back in control.

That night a group of us went down to the local bar restaurant and my 'Croatian fiddler' was 'jamming' for us. He was good and played a lot of traditional folk music. I asked him if he would play one of his favourite Croatian songs. He looked at me and responded, "You were horrible to me today." I replied, "That was

work, this is fun. You are coming to rehearsal tomorrow, aren't you?" He smiled back and of course he played for me and turned up at rehearsal without any 'fiddling'.

Not too many people spoke English in Slovenia and I never did learn to speak or pronounce their language, but what a great country. I spent a stunning three weeks touring and taking a step back into medieval times, nothing like that here in New Zealand.



Gary representing New Zealand, as the President of the six-member International Jury, at the famous, Primus Ikaalinen TV Show competition, which is part of the Sata-Hame Soi Accordion Festival in Ikaalinen, Finland. June 2011

ACT 3

(Scene 3)

Texas

Some people consider that I am a showman more than a conductor, especially when I leave an orchestra in performance and join the audience. I have said before, orchestras do not need a conductor. I am not one of those staid, boring conductors of whom I have personally seen too many of. Let us enjoy our music.

During the 2000's I had the privilege and pleasure on several occasions of being the guest conductor at the Texas Accordion Association's Convention, held annually in Dallas, in the convention centre of a major hotel. These were fun times as always, a time to catch up with many friends and make good music. Accordionists would travel from all parts of America and abroad to be at this annual four day Festival. It was an opportunity for the sharing of music with concerts, workshops and demonstrations. I would put together a festival orchestra of some fifty accordionists with a percussion section, playing mainly my own arrangements, and performing at the final evening concert. What a 'big' sound. I would call it my 'Accordion Symphonic Festival Orchestra'.

I often gave workshops myself. My two main topics would be on conducting, for those who had small orchestras of their own or had dreams of being a Maestro (I have to ask why? - only joking) and secondly 'On being an orchestra player and what the conductor expects of you and what you as an orchestra member should expect from the conductor.' A little more about this later, when I talk about mandolins.

At one of these concerts while I was conducting the Accordion Symphonic Festival Orchestra to an audience of about eight

hundred people, I noticed an old man sitting in the front row with his caregiver. I had met him briefly in the foyer as I was waiting to go on stage. He had come out for a drink of water. I jokingly suggested that he might like to have a turn at conducting. This was met with laughter and an immediate refusal.

Once the concert started, I was aware of this elderly gent clicking his camera to take photographs of his son who was playing in the orchestra. The stage was very low and the front row was close to the orchestra. As the *William Tell Overture* came to a conclusion I noticed that he was standing up very close to the orchestra in order to get a better photo of his son. As I stood the orchestra and we took our bows, our elderly photographer was almost in the orchestra.

I turned to him and said, “If you’ve decided to be part of the orchestra you might as well conduct them,” offering him the baton in exchange for his camera. “Here, take them through the finale to the *William Tell Overture*, I’ll look after your camera.”

After a moment’s hesitation and avoiding the anxious looks of his caregiver, he handed me his camera, took the baton, took up the podium position, sat the players, brought the baton down and the orchestra galloped off with the *Lone Ranger Theme*.

I had no idea at all as to the man’s identity; I just took off, down the centre aisle to the rear of the hall to observe the proceedings. As I passed the promoter, who was obviously a little worried and concerned, he looked at me questioningly and asked, “What’s happening?” “Don’t ask me,” I shrugged with a grin, “I have no idea what’s going on.”

The old man was waving his baton in time to the orchestra – with considerable energy and enthusiasm while his worried caregiver watched helplessly. However he was totally concentrating on the right hand side of the orchestra – where his son was playing. About half way through the performance, the orchestra leader stood up and leant over to our new conductor, tapped him on the shoulder and indicating the players on the left asked, “Hey, what about us?”

The audience laughed and applauded as the guest conductor responded by taking a more central position. The *Overture* finished with its traditional flourish and our elderly gentleman conductor, acknowledged the applause, stood the orchestra, shook hands with the leader and resumed his front seat with the assistance of his obviously relieved caregiver.

After the concert I was informed that the old man was an ex-army colonel. In his eighties and living in a rest home, he was a great supporter of his musician son. The colonel's photo and write-up were featured in the local papers and posted on the Internet. His conducting act was talked about for years.

One year, the week before the Dallas Convention, I rehearsed a small accordion group of about fourteen good players and we went on tour to the major centres in Texas. The local accordion associations organized the concerts in their centre and supplied a handful of players to join our 'merry band'. These extra players who had previously received the music to practise, required only one rehearsal with the main group a few hours before the concert and at a sound check.



The ex-army Colonel accepting applause after conducting the Massed Accordion Orchestra in Dallas, Texas

We travelled around Texas in a church bus (kindly loaned with driver) and all the appropriate religious signage on it. Imagine the scene as the bus arrived at the motel accommodation for the night and all these ‘mad’ accordionists disembarked from the coach, a real band of travelling ‘gypsy’ accordionists. It was an amazing short but fun filled tour travelling with such wonderful people, seeing much of what Texas had to offer, meeting friendly, hospitable hosts and performing good music to appreciative and enthusiastic audiences, not always to full halls but full enough to make it more than worthwhile.

A local tramline ran alongside one hall we played in and it presented us at fairly regular intervals with train vibrations and sounds. One of the pieces in our programme was my arrangement of the *Orange Blossom Special*. I tried to synchronize this number, as a train went by – at rehearsal yes, at performance no. My arrangement of the *Orange Blossom Special* is played all around the world. As I have never published this arrangement I am not sure how the accordion orchestras have come by it when I have only conducted it with the people in my combined festival orchestra. I guess that players have enjoyed playing it and have collected a set of parts to take back to their own orchestras. I unashamedly have to admit that is one of my better arrangements. I have had emails requesting, “Hi Gary, I seem to have the bass part missing to *Orange Blossom Special*. Could you please send me a pdf of it? Oh, by the way, a copy of the score would be good.” The accordion orchestra in Slovenia also had a copy of my arrangement of this music in their music library.

Now, we had just completed this successful week’s concert tour of Texas and this was our final concert at the convention in Dallas. Can you imagine my shock and horror, when, in performance, I brought the baton down and nothing happened? No one played. They just sat there, looked at me and smiled. I assumed that the orchestra were trying to play a collective trick on me and was I very relieved and delighted by the outcome.

One of the management team then came on stage and presented me with a large, ornamented, black and silver, Mexican sombrero.

What a lovely surprise. I conducted the remainder of the concert wearing it and boy, was it heavy! I commented to the audience when I received this 'hat', "Who would have ever imagined a symphony orchestra conductor, conducting an accordion orchestra wearing a Mexican sombrero. I'll bet this will be all around the Internet by tomorrow."



Sure enough, it took less than twenty-four hours, before a photo of me conducting in it, was posted up on the accordion Internet websites. To this day, the sombrero has its place, hanging on the wall in my music study room.

During another concert in Dallas when we were playing *Stars and Stripes forever*, by John Philip Sousa, the convener commented to me that he knew some tuba players. How would I like them to perform the bass solo in this march?

"How many can I have?"

"How many do you want?"

“I want at least a dozen, to march in from the back of the audience to *Stars and Stripes*, playing along, stand in front of the accordion orchestra, play the bass solo and then march out again through the audience.”

“Done.”

This will be interesting I thought, but true to form at the final rehearsal ‘the twelve’ turned up. Some were only playing euphoniums (a smaller version of the tuba) and I suspect that there were some younger ‘ring in’ players who were just holding the instrument to look like they were playing it. It worked. It looked great and the audience showed their approval with a standing ovation.



Review

Texas Creates Millennium Magic - USA

**Contributed by
Jane Christison**

World-class musicians, capacity audiences, electrical atmosphere and Gary Daverne combined to make the Texas Accordion Association Y2K Convention a show of pure Millennium Magic!

Conductor of the Auckland Symphony Orchestra, Gary Daverne directed the Convention Orchestra with the same conviction and respect he has used while directing some of the finest symphony orchestras in the world and the results were outstanding! From the first rehearsal to the grand finale concert 48 hours later, Gary took some fifty musicians of all levels and backgrounds and transformed them into a world class act that brought the house down several times over. The concert included such pieces as the *William Tell Overture*, several of Daverne's popular arrangements as well as his own composition *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* with soloist Kevin Friedrich.

The annual convention was a festival of concerts, workshops, dealer displays and fun, which featured people from as far away as New Zealand, Norway and all across the United States. Standing ovations were the norm for the array of world class artists who presented music ranging from the World Accordion Championships concert repertoire to Pop, Folk and Novelty, each style playing an important part in the diverse accordion repertoire.

Congratulations to the Texas Accordion Association for setting the standard for the Millennium!



Review

Lots of Great Squeezing in Texas

by Valarie Kieser

My usual expression for something that to me is truly fabulous is, “Wow!” Well, I can’t think of any other term for the 2001 Texas Accordion Association National Accordion Convention in Plano, Texas March 8-11. Every year it just seems to get better!

Maybe it’s because I’m getting to know some of the regulars there, but each year I meet wonderful new friends and players as well. In any reasonable space I couldn’t possibly cover all the wonderful aspects of this convention, so here are a few highlights.

Wow! Playing in the 35-accordion orchestra again this year under Gary Daverne of the Auckland, New Zealand Symphony. We played difficult arrangements of really great pieces, including a wonderful Beatles medley, a number composed by Gary called *Pocket Overture* (there is a story about how it got its name), “The Lord of the Dance” (faster toward the end than my fingers can fly), *Orange Blossom Special*, a fabulous *Glen Miller Medley*, and *The Syncopated Clock*, for part of which Gary called up a member of the audience to conduct us, and had the whole audience in stitches.

Wow! Friday Evening Party/Concert, which was an informal presentation by many different talented players and groups.

Wow! The Saturday Evening Concert, which was a more formal event with some of the best musicians I have ever heard - really first-class entertainment. It included our big orchestra as noted above, plus a special performance by the ‘Travelling Orchestra,’ consisting of a few members of the larger group. The travelling group toured Texas just before the convention, showing the public what the accordion can do. They blew everyone away with *España Cañi*, *El Rancho Grande* and a hilarious polka called *Grasshopper Polka*, (with perennial favourite Marilyn on a rhythm stick called the “Stump Fiddle,” that had everyone roaring with laughter).





Gary conducting the ATG (Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International) Festival Orchestra, in a cameo appearance at the Arlington Race Track, Chicago, 2003





CIA Award to Gary

ACT 3 (Scene 4)

Coupe Mondiale

The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) is recognized as the most prestigious annual accordion competition of international scope and takes place in a different country every year, under the auspices of the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes since the first such event, in 1938 in Paris. The CIA is affiliated with the International Music Council, (IMC) and NGO official partner to UNESCO.

I have had the pleasure of attending several of these championships during my years of association with the accordion. At the 1990 Coupe in Trossingen, Germany, I conducted *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* with Harley as soloist, with the Orchester des Harmonika-Spielring-Böblingen, a very fine accordion orchestra that I was to conduct on many more occasions in the years to follow with both accordion and symphony orchestras.

In 2009 the Coupe Mondiale was held in Auckland, my hometown, a very special event and time for me in my accordion life. I had the privilege of involving my Auckland Symphony Orchestra in the first half, at the opening concert, performing works for solo accordion and symphony orchestra. This was a rare opportunity for audiences to hear a symphony orchestra with different international accordion soloists playing together on the one programme.

Naturally I included *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* performed this time with American soloist Mary Torkaski, who had performed *Rhapsody* with me a few times in other parts of the world.



World Accordion Orchestra 111, Bruce Mason Centre

In the second half of the opening night's concert, I conducted as part of the programme a large combined New Zealand Accordion Orchestra and included my arrangement of tradition of *New Zealand Songs* and *Musical Party*, another of my original compositions.

But perhaps the highlight of the Coupe Mondiale for me was in the final concert where I was one of two conductors, sharing the conducting role of the World Accordion Orchestra III, which involved one hundred and forty accordionists, some of the best in the world, representing fourteen countries, with the percussion section from the Auckland Symphony. I was able to perform two original compositions of my own, one being, *Pocket Overture* and a new composition, composed especially for the Coupe Mondiale, *Auckland March*. This was a massive, exciting sounding orchestra, put together on very limited rehearsal time. As a conductor you sometimes wonder at rehearsals whether it will all come together. It usually does, the players will not let you down.

At this event I was recipient of the *CIA Honoured Friend of the Accordion Award*, 'In appreciation for your outstanding contributions to the accordion movement,' and won the *2009 CIA Award for Best Original Work – Classical Music*, for solo accordion, titled *Koriana*, which means accordion in Maori.

In the years when I was involved with the Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra, I composed many solo works for the accordion and I was very fortunate to have these fine young players willing to perform and record these compositions for me, as many of the works were specially written for them. These recordings I would conduct and produce.

My success in the accordion area was personified by my composition *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* that has had over 300 performances and a *Pocket Overture*. However, as any artist (be she or he a writer, painter, filmmaker or composer) knows, as soon as their work is made public, they open themselves to critical comment.

Such was the case with a CD I released under the title *Accordion Concert Music by Gary Daverne*, a CD was comprised entirely of my original compositions for accordion.

Confédération Internationale des Accordionistes (CIA)

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A lengthy review in 1998 by Joseph Natoli, which reviewed each individual track, began by acknowledging “difficulty in maintaining an entire CD’s worth of innovative material” and complimenting me “for being dedicated enough to the accordion to want to compose an entire seventy two minutes worth of original compositions for every possible accordion combination including solo, duets, ensembles and accordion orchestra.” He commented that a *Pocket Overture* “immediately captivated me it had an abundance of colour, creative ideas was definitely a worthwhile four-minute listening experience.” He was not so complimentary regarding the remaining tracks, explaining that “I found myself begging to hear something new in each successive composition, but it quickly became a challenge instead to count how many occurrences of the same motive elements I could find repeated on each track.” After an in-depth analysis of each track he concludes, “It is simple, entertaining, easy-listening music that does not require a tremendous amount of involvement or effort from the listener.”



Betty Jo Simon (USA) performing the Galla-Rini Concerto, with the ASO at the Bruce Mason Centre during the 2009 Coupe Mondiale

Interestingly, my reply appeared after the review. Having thanked Joseph for making the effort to write such a detailed review, as I believe if he had not cared he would not have commented, I challenged the writer's criticism of the repetitive motifs, pointing out that "I can name many famous composers ... who have their own recognizable 'motifs'. I have mine. Look at my jingles and orchestral music, not to mention the many children's songs and musicals. They have their own little characteristics and personalities."

I sold a few CD's.

Happily, there were later reviews of later accordion compositions and recordings, where the reviewer was more kindly towards me.

Gem of the Kaipara was written for solo accordion with string orchestra and percussion and it premiered on May 11 2002 by the Auckland Symphony Orchestra and featured accordion soloist Kevin Friedrich, who recorded it a few years later with the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra – Czech Republic.

The life and works of long time accordion and arts supporter, the late Mrs. Jenny Maioha Cocurullo, inspired the piece. A citizen of Dargaville who was a great promoter of the northern Kaipara region, in the north of the North Island of New Zealand, she was considered by many to be a 'gem' – hence the name.

The piece has since been played in various parts of the world and commented on favourably by reviewers including Henry Doktorski who wrote, 'I heartily recommend this CD for all lovers of the classical accordion. My kudos to Kevin Friedrich for a beautiful and moving performance on his accordion ... which blends perfectly with the strings.'

Review

Gem of the Kaipara.

**World Premiere a Major Success - New Zealand
Contributed by Lionel Reekie**

N*ew York based accordionist Kevin Friedrich and the Auckland Symphony Orchestra strings presented the world premiere of Gem of the Kaipara for solo accordion, string orchestra and percussion, composed by Gary Daverne last weekend to a completely sold-out audience in Dargaville, New Zealand.*

Written as a musical tribute to the late Jenny Cocurullo, long time accordion and arts supporter, the premiere of Gem of the Kaipara received a standing ovation. At the request of the concert organizers, the work was played a second time and received another standing ovation. Jenny had always promoted the Kaipara region of New Zealand as the gem of the north; however, she was in turn considered the Gem of the Kaipara, thus the title of the new work by Gary Daverne, which was commissioned by the Kaipara District Council.



*Kevin Friedrich performing “Gem”
at the Dargaville Town Hall 3 December 2006*



Soloist Kevin, Maestro Petr and composer Gary, with the Moravian Philharmonic during recording, Gem of the Kaipara



Kevin and Gary at the Dargaville Museum

Kevin, President of the Confederation Internationale des Accordeonistes (CIA), presented a series of three concerts as guest soloist with Gary Daverne and the Auckland Symphony Orchestra. Performing in both Auckland and Dargaville utilizing his talents as an exponent of the button and piano accordion, Kevin also performed two works by Gary Daverne, 'Rhapsody for Accordion Orchestra' on bayan accordion and 'Gem of the Kaipara', for solo accordion string orchestra and percussion, on piano accordion.

Performing to a combined audience of over 3,000 people, the well-received concerts provided great exposure for the accordion as well as presenting an exciting new accordion/orchestral work by Gary Daverne.

Dear Gary,

Thank you so much for the 'Gem of the Kaipara' and the wonderful concert the ASO gave in Dargaville last night. I feel so humbled to have been there and to have listened to such wonderful music particularly on behalf of my Mum. You captured the spirit of Mum so well in your composition - you brought together the Kaipara and my Mum just so perfectly.

My mother absolutely adored music in all its forms and as I was sitting listening to the Orchestra and Kevin, wonderful memories came back to me of my childhood, growing up in Dargaville, having a Mum that was so community spirited. . I thought of the many hours that I had spent in that hall as a child - whilst there were rehearsals and performances of stage shows, concerts, galas and the like.

I feel honoured that my memories as a child have been added to as an adult in such a wonderful way on this occasion. I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to the orchestra and my best wishes for your success in the future.

*Kindest regards
Noel Cocurullo - Kylie Sprague*



Stephanie Poole with the Auckland Symphony Orchestra

In 2012 I was commissioned by the New Zealand Accordion Association to compose a work for solo accordion and symphony orchestra to be performed by the current World Accordion Champion, Grayson Masefield, nephew of Harley for who I composed *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra*.



ACT 4 (Scene 1)

Snippets from Other Symphony Orchestras

So what were some of the most important elements of my conducting success?

Perhaps you could say, "defining difference", that "something special"

In a world of many conductors, I believe that it is very important to have that, 'defining difference', that 'something special', that keeps the hall full and the audience coming back again after again.

Probably from my early days as a pop/rock musician and entertainer and also from my advertising jingle profession, there was a love for the audience, a wanting to 'catch the audience', to surprise and please them.

I don't like intervals. I feel they are there for the promoters to make money with refreshments.

My regular concerts were usually on a Sunday afternoon, always about 70 minutes in length without an interval, with a carefully selected programme.

I liked performing to 'family audiences' playing popular classics and music from stage and screen and always including something not quite familiar and hide it amongst the popular works. I found that many of the overseas orchestras I conducted, also wanted music from stage and screen. Being a film composer, I knew how the music should be performed.

I believed the audience were there to be entertained, not educated although I did introduce new works to them.

The soloists I preferred to use, as I have mentioned elsewhere in the book, were mainly younger talented people. I wanted to give them that opportunity to perform with a large symphony orchestra in top venues. This was one on my strong points as a conductor. Also I always presented my programmes from the podium. The audience I felt, were part of the concert. Call it people communication, just having a chat with them. They loved it. I got reprimanded from one European orchestra for announcing my encore, a New Zealand love song. That was always something else I did, play an encore. I could also draw energy from the audience as I spoke to them.

I guess a loyal large orchestra, with large audiences, (often people turned away), time after time, over so many years, says it all. I must have been doing something right.

There were two small problems with my receiving and accepting invitations to conduct foreign orchestras.

The first was that for thirty-five years I was resident conductor of my own orchestra, the Auckland Symphony that demanded my priority. I turned down more engagements than I ever accepted. Conducting foreign orchestras for me was more of a hobby attached to a sightseeing holiday.

The second problem was that because I lived in New Zealand, it was a long way to travel and also expensive, so why would orchestra managements want to engage me with the added travel expenses when there are many good maestros in their own region. Often I would pay my own air travel to the foreign orchestras and include a holiday overseas. The conducting fees usually covered my airfares so basically I was paying for my holiday by conducting.

There was one time in 1997 when I conducted a concert in Jakarta, Indonesia.

For some unknown reason, the week long rehearsals were held in the tourist city of Yogyakarta, a short plane flight away.

Because this was a semi-professional orchestra, rehearsals were held later in the day between 4.00 pm and 8.00 pm. Also, it was supposed to be cooler.

The temperatures were still over 30 degrees Celsius and rehearsals were held in a school hall without air conditioning. It was an uncomfortable, sweaty situation, even with an electric fan on a table alongside me.

The programme was *Dvorak's 'Cello Concerto* and the *New World Symphony* with my concert overture *Youth of Auckland*. This overture was a regular with most overseas orchestras I 'guest' conducted.

Now, the *New World Symphony* has a beautiful and famous cor anglais solo in the second movement, based on a Negro Spiritual melody. This orchestra did not have a cor anglais player. What to do? The principal flautist informed me that he played the alto saxophone and would be happy to 'give it a go'. He was a lovely player, so I went with it. It didn't sound wrong, just different and not what one was used to hearing in this movement. In fact it was quite beautiful. Perhaps even Dvorak would have chosen the sound of alto saxophone if the instrument had been invented in his day and he had access to one.

The newspaper critic reviewed the solo favourably.

Because rehearsals were later in the day it gave me most of the day to be a tourist, and having an English speaking local as a driver, I made the most of it. We visited all the sights, temples and markets and ate the local food from the food stalls, a practice not recommended by the tourist guidebooks. But the local Javanese cuisine was yummy and I enjoyed indulging myself, for one whole week of scrumptious food, without any consequences.

Why do I mention this? Well! The concert was to be held in Jakarta, where we had one full day's rehearsal the day before and my first meeting with a young American boy who was the 'cello soloist.

He was a fine young player with an excellent technique and easy to work with. He knew his 'cello repertoire well but had little experience with orchestral accompaniment. He was used to playing with a piano and pianists can generally keep in time with a soloist, who runs away. I had to keep a tight reign on him at times. Today Reynard Rott is a successful soloist in Germany where has lived since 2003.



American born 'cellist, Reynard Rott and Gary.

Now, I was staying at a four star hotel and it was concert day.

The day's schedule was:

relax in the morning

12 midday: Radio interview.

3.00pm: TV interview.

4.00pm: sound check and technical rehearsal in the theatre,
for the evening's concert.

Till now I have had no food problems, so I have breakfast at 8am at the hotel.

By 11am I am as ‘sick as a dog’, going both ends. Somehow, I fake the TV and radio interviews. I am not in good shape. The technical rehearsal I want to forget. It is amazing, but when it came to the concert time, my body went into remission, but I was struggling. I was not a ‘happy chappy’ at all.

Somehow I got through the overture and we had played the first movement of the ‘cello concerto, when a weak voice from the soloist says, “I cannot go on.”

Blood was pouring out of his nose. I had no idea why. His white shirt was covered in blood and his nose is flowing like a tap. A member of the audience came up to him and mopped him up with something and somehow stopped the bleeding. I can still remember his sad eyes looking up at me on the podium as he heard me tell him, “I am dying, you are dying. This is show biz and the show must go on,” and it did.

Taking all into account, he gave a good, creditable performance and the critic was sympathetic and positive, as he was with the whole concert. He wrote in his review; “The performance, to a sold-out crowd, was a great combination of teamwork, youth and experience.”

As for me, well, I had planned three days of sightseeing in Jakarta after the concert. I spent those three days in a hotel bed, plus a few more days on my return home to New Zealand, feeling sorry for myself. The diagnosis was food poisoning from banana skins, transferred from the skin, by my hands, to the fruit when I was peeling the banana to cut it up and put it on my cereal for breakfast.

Beware of banana skins. Have you ever noticed that a monkey will never eat a peeled banana or a banana with the skin broken and never handles the bare fruit?



Also in 1997 I conducted the National Symphony Orchestra of Malaysia, in a very interesting concert hall, where the audience sat on three sides of the orchestra. The orchestra basically was sitting in the middle of the terraced seating. The back wall was the replica of a castle wall. It looked stunning. I initially thought that it was a sports arena, but no, it was the way the concert hall had been designed and the acoustics were very good I seem to remember. I was presenting the programme from the podium and it did feel quite strange addressing an audience to the front, side and behind you. A similar feeling when I was conducting; I could look up and see the faces of the audience all around me. I smiled a lot. The Newspaper critic wrote: ‘the orchestra played to a packed audience comprising young and old. “Imagine you are amongst the dinosaurs”, conductor Gary Daverne said, before leading the orchestra to perform *Jurassic Park*.’ A lovely orchestra, warm and friendly, which played well and deserved the glowing full-page review, with photos in the Kuala Lumpur Strait Times.



The year was 2002 and I was in South Korea conducting the Incheon City Symphony Orchestra, a large orchestra, all nationals with some very fine young players in it. The orchestra’s code of concert dress was tails and bow ties for everyone including the women. No argument here about skirts or trousers for the women.

I am not sure how I came to get this conducting gig but it was yet again another South East Asian orchestra. A few years earlier in 1997 I had worked with the Taiwan Symphony Orchestra and back in 1995, with the Japanese Yukiwariso Choir performing Beethoven’s 9th Symphony with the Auckland Symphony Orchestra. I suspect that these engagements came about because, during my Auckland concerts some twenty percent of my audience would be Asian and I often spoke on local Asian radio or featured in the local Asian newspapers, promoting these concerts. This is where Asian promoters, living in Auckland, would have ‘discovered’ me.

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뉴질랜드 오클랜드 교향악단

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Gary Paverne / Overture (Youth of Auckland)

Beethoven / Piano Concerto No.3

Dvorak / Symphony No.9 (From The New World)



객원지휘자
Gary Paverne



피아노 / 신민자



FFA 월드컵™ 인천 경기일정			
날짜	시간	경기	
2002. 6. 19(수)	19:00	조선민주주의인민공화국 vs 한국	
2002. 6. 21(금)	19:00	조선민주주의인민공화국 vs 일본	
2002. 6. 24(일)	20:30	조선민주주의인민공화국 vs 미국	

2002년 4월 18일(목) 오후 7시30분

인천종합문화예술회관(대공연장)

주최 : 인천종합문화예술회관
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All these South East Asian orchestra concerts had their ‘moments’ mainly with language. I remember that with the Taiwan Symphony I spent a week rehearsing in Taichung City, their home base. Now even though I had an English map of this city of two-and-a-half million people, all the street signage was in Mandarin. Little or no English was spoken and sign language proved ineffectual. Thank goodness for the Frenchman who was piano soloist and he spoke a smattering of English. He was an excellent and experienced pianist and he performed the *Ravel Piano Concerto*. I love this work to listen to but I hope I will never have to conduct it again. For whatever reason this concerto caused me a few problems, especially in the slow movement. Pianos with poor keyboard actions did not help the cause and we played three concerts at three different venues, but we survived.

Back in Incheon I was staying in a hotel some distance from the concert hall where the Incheon City Symphony Orchestra rehearsed. The principal trumpet player was my ‘Guardian Angel’ and even if there was little English spoken he looked after me very well. After a few days he decided that the travelling was too much and moved me into his apartment with his wife, a viola player in the orchestra and his two kids. This suited me much more than ‘living’ in a hotel, I really do prefer to be billeted and his wife spoke some English. At home he would play a little jazz while I played piano with him. We visited the markets and did some sightseeing together, ate some great food and the rehearsals were without stress or problems. All was good, very good.

Now the afternoon of the concert, we had been out driving after the sound check in the concert hall and returned to his apartment which was in a tall apartment block, one of a group, all some thirty stories tall. Time was running out and as traffic could be heavy he decided that we should go by Metro, as there was a station directly at the concert hall.

The concert started at 7.30pm, at 7.05 I was still sitting in the subway train counting the remaining stops to our destination. Was I panicking a little? I kept saying to myself, “Well they won’t start without me, I hope.”

We arrived at the concert hall around 7.10 and I raced to my dressing room to don my concert attire. The media and well-wishers were all there to greet me. They all wanted to say hello, interview me and take photos with me. All I wanted to do was to get dressed and focus on the concert ahead. Flustered, I made it in time (just) but instead for walking slowly to the stage entrance, I rushed and yes I tripped over, not a good start. I picked myself up, more embarrassed than injured, walked swiftly on stage trying hard to look like I was in complete control and then I forgot to shake hands with the concertmaster, which he mentioned, quite abruptly to me during the interval.

The overture went fine, no problems that I recall and why should there have been any? The concerto was *Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 3*. The soloist was a lovely mature lady, about forty years of age who lectured at the University, spoke fluent English and was an excellent and experienced pianist.

This woman had class and it showed in all ways. Her concert dress was full and elegant, with a fur lined U shaped neckline and in fact she looked stunning. Most Asian women are not generally very well endowed in the bust area and often wear uplifting bras. The top of her dress was loose fitting to enable her to move without restriction while playing the piano, so here I am standing above her, turning to cue her, she leans forward, her dress drapes forward and my eyes are met with a well exposed cleavage. This was not the sort of distraction that I needed, well not just then anyway, another time another place, maybe, but not every time I turned to look at her to keep eye contact with my soloist as conductors must do.

She would never have known and probably never gave it a thought that the maestro would be standing above her and looking down at her. I was tempted to say something to her, but I didn't have the courage and I didn't want to spoil her evening after such a superb performance.



While I was on a two week International Conductor's Workshop in Switzerland, during the early 2000s, I met an English 'cellist/conductor who, with his Portuguese 'cellist wife, ran a full time music school in Portugal.

This school was different from most music schools. The students were paid a salary to come to school.

This husband and wife team were both fine musicians and astute business people, having secured financial backing for this school through the EEC (European Economic Community). The school was set up in the small township of Mirandela, in the port wine-growing region, some three hours north east of Oporto in Portugal.

Without going into finer details of how the school operated it basically worked like this. Twenty-five, thirteen year-old students were chosen each year from the local community. For an audition, all they were required to do as was to repeat a tapped rhythmical pattern sing a song and have five fingers on each hand. No musical knowledge or ability was required.

In the first year, 80% of their education would be general and 20% music. They were each given an orchestral stringed instrument to learn, making up a balanced string orchestra. Instrumental tutors were recruited from the Eastern European countries. Administrative and general teaching staff, I suspect, were employed from the local community.

I had the good fortune and honour of being invited to spend two weeks in Portugal working with these young musicians.

In the second and subsequent years the same recruitment policy applied with the musical curriculum percentage increasing year by year. English was taught as a second language and in year four and five, a second musical instrument, usually the piano, was taught along with the option of composition.

Certainly there were some dropouts, but the number was small and these young people were being paid to attend school, paid

to get an education and paid for the opportunity of a career as a professional musician. I arrived at the school in their fifth year and there were over one hundred students with five orchestras.

In the recent two years the school had extended the intake to include some woodwind instruments, with brass and percussion intended at a later date.

For the students at the end of their year five course, upon graduation, it was proposed to establish a professional local orchestra under the guidance and assistance of the tutors and their music director.

Although I did combine year three and four orchestras, I worked primarily with the year five orchestra who were twenty-two mature young adults eighteen to nineteen years of age. They had lived and worked together for near on five years. Most, if not all problems, whether it is emotional, personality conflicts, individual relationships, or whatever, had been sorted out. They were a well oiled, disciplined group, supportive of one other and performing at an extremely high standard. They were a family.

Their orchestra seats did not have a mortgage on them: that is to say, the players did not have permanent seating positions. This gave everyone the opportunity and experience of sitting in the front desk, being a section leader, or having to sit at the back of the section. This was, after all, a training orchestra.

They were a delight to work with, co-operative, without issues, yet very professional and still very naïve in the ways of a professional orchestra.

I wanted to share with them some of my experience as a recording studio orchestra conductor. So one morning, without any warning, I introduced myself as David Rose, a famous American light music composer and told them we were in a recording studio situation and unfortunately time was very limited. I needed this new piece of music, *Holiday For Strings*, recorded within thirty minutes.

I then handed out the parts to them for this three-minute piece of string music and rehearsed as if we were recording this music for real. This will test their sight-reading abilities, I thought. Within

the thirty minutes the players had this popular string piece, not too difficult, but with some tricky sections, up to a recording standard. I was proud of them. This was a style of music that they were not familiar with. They did really well.

This was a hard working orchestra, performing several concerts each week - well certainly while I was there anyway. These concerts were generally held in the churches of nearby and some not so nearby, villages.

What intrigued me, to the point of frustration, was the fact that the concerts we advertised to commence at 20:00 hours. The orchestra would set up, sound check from 19:00 hours ready for the scheduled start. At the appointed time there was only a handful of people in the audience, so we all patiently waited, including the audience, as people drifted in over the next two hours.

By 22:30 we were underway.

Apparently the audience comes to concerts after the shops close and the football is finished. "Why advertise to start at 20:00?" I asked. "That's the way it is in Portugal," I was told.

In the first week with the orchestra I didn't conduct any of the concerts. These were all pre-arranged concerts, so I tagged along with them.

One concert in Oporto finished around midnight, followed by the usual after- function reception of food, drinks and speeches. I finally 'hit the road' for the three hour drive back to our village, over the mountains, around 1.00 am.

The coach with the orchestra players arrived home around 4.30 am.

At 9.30 am we were all there for the 'downbeat', be it a little hazy eyed.

One out of town concert I did conduct it frustrated me so much, that come 21.00 hours I started the programme to a handful of people in the audience. By 22.30 we played our encore to a capacity audience with people still arriving to attend the concert.

No repercussions, just a few strange looks. I won a few 'brownie points' from the orchestra players though.

But my final concert in the local concert hall attached to the music school tops them all. This was the 'big one'!

There had been two weeks of concentrated hard effort, put in with three of the orchestras, which would combine and perform individually, conducted by an international guest conductor – me.

Everything had gone exceptionally well. I had rehearsed the orchestras in the concert hall in the afternoon and we were all set up for the evening's performance. The advertising had proved effective with good ticket sales and we were expecting a large audience.

The school directors were pleased, the players were happy and excited and I had my usual nerves but I felt confident.

What could possibly go wrong? Nothing!

We were all too well rehearsed.

So there we all stood, looking magnificent, men in their black bow ties and tuxedos, women in long black dresses, and me in my tails and white bow tie with an audience all dressed up for a special occasion and night out, all standing outside a locked auditorium.

Where was the key and where was the caretaker? He was nowhere to be found or contacted.

Had he forgotten? How could he? He locked up the hall after us, only a few hours earlier. Perhaps he had gone to the football.

At 21:00 I 'called it a night', sent everyone home, orchestras and audience and went to the local bar for a 'stiff drink'.

I wrote a protest letter in English. Who knows how they translated it? It was a big disappointment for the students and also for me.

To this day I do not know what happened to the caretaker and the key. It was a concert that never was.

It was still a wonderful experience for me working with these enthusiastic young Portuguese people, but the bonus for me on this trip was that the local Mayor had taken me under his wing. He took me for powerboat rides on the famous Douro River, as well as sightseeing tours plus he owned a vineyard.

Have you ever tried to carry on a plane, twelve bottles of vintage port wine as carry on hand luggage, along with your music case full of orchestra scores?



I have said a number of times and I am sure I have mentioned it elsewhere in this book, that there are two sections of the orchestra that a conductor cannot argue with if they feel the desire to exert their dominant presence, tempos and volume. They are the percussion and trombone sections. If they want to take over then there is not much a conductor can do other than concede defeat to avoid disaster.

It was April 2008 in the Czech Republic with a top orchestra and I was conducting a programme of music from *Stage and Screen* – popular film themes and show music. I grew up with cowboy movies and loved the big expansive theme music that accompanied them. I guess this has more than influenced me in the desire to conduct and write film music along with my early years in musical theatre.

At the final rehearsal the Concertmaster asked me why we were not playing the encore marked in the music, repeating the final section from *Lord of the Dance*. It really was a better choice and one that had worked so well many times before, so I decided to change the encore by deleting from the programme *Theme from New York, New York* even though we had rehearsed it.

Encores and standing ovations are not a common occurrence for conductors and orchestras at symphony concerts. Soloists generally give an encore but usually not an orchestra. I liked to give an encore where they were deserved.

We were playing to a capacity audience with standing room only in the balcony. This had been a dream concert. I had got through the entire programme without any ‘moments of madness’ but with many ‘moments of magic.’

After *Lord of the Dance* the entire audience were standing and giving a sustained applause. I stood the orchestra to acknowledge the continuing applause with me, as I received flowers and shook hands with the section leaders. As the applause continued, I handed my flowers to the female harpist, in recognition of her having earlier during the concert slinked her way through the orchestra waving pink gloves for me to wear during the playing of Henry Mancini’s *Pink Panther Theme*. Yes, it was the *Pink Panther Theme*, those pink gloves yet again and a huge Pink Panther stuffed toy, slinking around the stage and concert hall.

We encored *Lord of the Dance* as arranged, the audience clapped along and we received another standing ovation. The orchestra had smiles of bewilderment on their faces.

“What now?” I ask the Concert Master.

He shook his head and replied, (he speaks good English – one of the few in the orchestra who spoke any English) “I don’t know. We don’t get this sort of situation very often. We were not prepared for this.”

I said, “Let’s repeat *Lord of the Dance* encore.” He agreed.

I announce to the audience, (knowing that some can understand English), that because we do not have another prepared encore we will repeat the end part to *Lord of the Dance*. I announce to the orchestra in a loud clear voice, *Lord of the Dance – Encore*, forgetting that they are not my own orchestra and most will



*Advertising my concert in Olomouc with the
Moravska Filharmonie*

not understand me, call a loud vocal count-in of four beats and together on the downbeat the orchestra starts playing..... something!

I have no idea what they were playing. I'm not sure that they knew what they were playing either. The strings were definitely *Lord of the Dance*-ing as was the percussion section. Their leader spoke good English, but as for the others who knew? Unbelievable cacophony, I am in panic mode, then, after two measures, loud and positive from the trombone section came that familiar theme of *New York, New York*.

Within beats the whole orchestra was back together swinging their way through the *Theme from New York, New York*. Where was my score? In my dressing room of course, although I didn't need it. The orchestra still had the music in their folders.

Who needs a conductor anyway?

Thank you trombones for saving the day by taking the initiative – or was it just coincidence, lack of understanding or just plain luck? Unfortunately, as none of them spoke any English I never found out. I doubt if the audience even noticed this ‘moment of madness’ in what was truly a wonderful concert.

It was interesting about this European audience not understanding English.

I was performing a children’s concert a few days earlier, same orchestra, same venue, but with a slightly different format and programme and with the use of a narrator in their native Czech tongue.

I got a young boy up from the audience, as I frequently do in lighter music and school programmes, to conduct, in this case, the *Star Wars March*. Now, what are my real chances at a school concert in the Czech Republic, in a city where little English is spoken, where I have a Czech translator and narrator for the concert, of choosing at random from a non-speaking audience, an English speaking ‘volunteer’. Slim I would think!

I led this eleven or twelve year-old boy to the stage and asked him his name and he replied with his name. I exclaimed, “You speak English?” to which I received a very proper reply without hesitation in a loud clear voice, “Of course!”

I gave him a few basic conducting lessons, told him that the orchestra didn’t watch, so give a loud clear audible count in and with a bit of luck they would start. He did this and the orchestra played. He was wonderful and conducted like a professional and enjoyed himself, as did the audience. He was a star.

He showed his appreciation by sending me this email:

Good day Mr. Daverne

My name is Zdenka Vichova and you can remember me from the concert of Moravian philharmonic (6. 4. 2008, Olomouc) – you chose me to conduct the march from the Star Wars.

It was a special experience for me, because I play trumpet since I was 10 and I'm a member of brass music orchestra for 8 years. (It's not as professional as the philharmonic, because the members of it are only the youth, who go to music school and play instruments in their leisure time.)

So, it's always me, who must play according to conductor and follow his signs...(and now it was vice versa, because I was standing in face of the musicians and they were waiting for my sign... :-))

*I know, that the march is relatively easy rhythm and the philharmonic didn't need me for rhythm and playing, because they played according to the drummer (they only needed to know when to start and that was all my „work“ needed by them :-))
Nevertheless, I liked it very much. Thank you that you chose me.
Have a nice time*

Zdenka

(P.S. Apologise my English grammar, please)

My pleasure, Zdenka.

This time, it is the same orchestra, same venue, but slightly different concert and remembering that this is a top European professional orchestra.

The music we were playing was from the film *Pirates of the Caribbean*. At the beginning there is a lovely rollicking 'cello solo after a four-measure introduction. I repeat this whole section of the music because it sounds so good.

On the turn around, the solo 'cello leader this time waits only two measures instead of the four and without any cue from me, he starts repeating his solo.

I looked down at him and there he was smiling up at me, grooving away and having a great time, doing his thing with his solo. I turned and looked to the concertmaster who had a surprised look on his face. He brought his violin section in two measures early to catch up with the solo 'cello.

So what we had was the woodwind section playing in full glory and certainly not in the same part of the Caribbean as I was, all bouncing away in the 12/8 tempo and all having fun, two measures behind the strings and the solo 'cello. The brass and percussion were somewhere else, not too sure where.

Help! What do I do? I knew there was a break and a tempo change coming up twenty-four measures away. Could we hang on till then I asked myself?

We got to the break, I put my hand up and all the strings stopped and waited while the woodwind continued for another two measures and then stopped. There were a few strange, unbelieving looks from the woodwind section, but I smiled back at them, all was well and we continued to our 'final destination' in the Caribbean.

Another 'moment of madness' and once again I doubt if the audience even noticed. It was all played with so much energy and conviction.

And what did the principal cellist say to me after the concert in his limited English? "Great concert. Great concert."

There was a moment from a concert in a previous year with this orchestra, which will always be memorable.

We were playing a symphonic suite of the music from the film *Lord of the Rings* by Howard Shore. In this arrangement there is a beautiful boy soprano solo, *In Dreams*. In the absence of the solo boy's voice I gave the melody to a solo flute. At the end of the

rehearsal the flautist came up to me and asked in sign language if I wanted the solo played up an octave, as it was written in the extreme low register of the flute. No spoken English was understood here. I indicated with my thumb, down, as written.

At the next rehearsal she brought along and played the solo on the alto flute.

“Wow,” is all I could say and the orchestra responded with sensitivity in their accompaniment and visible acknowledgement of a beautiful melody, beautifully played and interpreted.

That evening’s performance by her was played at a level higher and was ‘pure magic.’ When I received my flowers at the end of the concert I walked through the orchestra and handed them to her, discovering that more flowers were being given to her from the orchestra management. It was a beautiful performance deserving of both bouquets of flowers. Thank you for the lasting memory.

Here is another letter from a Czech audience member, this time in very good English.

Hello

This is just a quick note to say thank you very much for making such wonderful music accessible to young children. I brought along 11 primary school children to the concert on Sunday, (together with some parents) and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. For some of the children it was the first time that they saw just how music is made – it was a real eye-opener. They had seen the movies but did not have any real appreciation of how the sound tracks were put together.

Thank you for providing this opportunity free of charge. If we had had to pay for the concert, I doubt any of the children would have been able to go.

Kind regards

Linda

İSTANBUL "SES"LENİYOR

Şef : Gary Daverne

Solist : Şenova Ülker (*Trompet*)

Cuma 15 Nisan 2005 Saat:19.30

Cumartesi 16 Nisan 2005 Saat:11.00

A.K.M. BÜYÜK SALON

T.C. KÜLTÜR ve TURİZM BAKANLIĞI GÜZEL SANATLAR GENEL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

İSTANBUL DEVLET SENFONİ ORKESTRASI 2004 - 2005 KONSERLERİ



İDSO

İSTANBUL DEVLET SENFONİ ORKESTRASI

As the conductor you trust that they are very familiar with the piece they are performing, which almost makes you superfluous. Set the tempo and away you go. There are, of course, some very fine conductors around, but there are also a lot of bad ones who do the circuit because they are able to wave their arms around impressively. It's a 'bone of contention' as in many cases they're little more than a figurehead. Basically, I acknowledge that the orchestra does the real work.

In my early years I was present at the rehearsal of one of London's top orchestras and witnessed the principal horn player stand up and tell the visiting conductor how the horn section was going to play the *Water Music* so there was no need to rehearse it. I thought at the time that this was a bit cheeky, but in retrospect and having similar experiences of my own, when an orchestra is playing the same music every two weeks and with limited rehearsal time with a new conductor there is virtually no room to vary interpretations. I was to experience this myself as a conductor in later years.

It was in 2005, with one professional European orchestra, the concertmaster, who had held that seat for 40 years and was a conductor in his own right, told me in no uncertain terms how they were going to play the *New World Symphony* and how I was to conduct it. I can understand this reasoning, especially when these orchestras can have a different conductor every week and there is little time to get to know each other. It can be a difficult and intimidating situation. He didn't like my film music interpretation of the lush melodies that Dvorak wrote. Too much liberty with tempos I was told.

I went along with his request and after four days of rehearsal time, the orchestra were fairly familiar with my style. During the concert performance, I conducted it my way. I knew the orchestra would follow me and wouldn't let the side down. They were excellent performances but I wasn't invited back. Did I want to go back? Not really.

There are some orchestras you don't want to go back to anyway as a guest conductor. I had a great resident orchestra of my own and as I have said, guest conducting out of New Zealand was more of

a sightseeing hobby. After you have visited all the local churches, cathedrals, mosques, ancient ruins, art centres, museums etc. and you don't speak the language of that country, it can become quite lonely and rarely are you able to take a partner with you. Rehearsals are usually in the morning, so you have the afternoon and evening free. Sometime the orchestra management will organize lunches and dinners, perhaps some local sight seeing, but generally you are left to your own devices.



Lack of communication with musical scores or arrangements:

It has been known for soloists and conductors to turn up to the first orchestral rehearsal and find that they have different music to each other and the orchestra.

Generally the soloist and conductor have got together before the first rehearsal to discuss any variances and interpretations, but not always.

Differences can take the form of different arrangements, keys or even different works, e.g. a different concerto. There was one instance when I was conducting the youth orchestra at a weekend music school. We were to perform, with a massed youth choir, *The Grand March from Aida*. To save copying many extra orchestral and choral parts, I borrowed two sets of the music from two different sources and gave them to the librarian to hand out. At the first rehearsal the play through was very interesting, two sets of parts in two different keys. The children thought it was funny, me, just frustrating and time consuming.

There are many published arrangements of the same standard orchestral work available and I have never quite figured out why there are so many different published arrangements available. Alphabetical letters can often replace rehearsal numbers and they don't always match up.

Some arrangements have cues of other instruments included in the other parts so that a smaller ensemble can play the work. Often there is only a piano/conductor score and not a full orchestral score. Not always the best to work from for a conductor but there are fewer pages to turn. I personally do not mind using these reduced scores. A conductor should know his music anyway.

There are arrangements that have been simplified, even to changing the music to a more playable key for those players with lesser ability. I am not referring to school orchestra arrangements. Those arrangements fall into a different category and there are certainly some very fine arrangements to be found available here.

Sometimes hand-copied parts have errors in them and it's very time consuming sorting errors out.

If different music is discovered at a rehearsal, compromise is the best solution. It's no use getting your 'knickers in a knot'. It is easier for a conductor to learn a new score than to expect the soloist to learn a new concerto or whatever.

I have had a few instances where I have had to smile and compromise, usually caused by poor (or lack) of communication in a foreign language.

Once with a Middle Eastern Orchestra I had requested the music to the *Karelia Overture* by *Sibelius*. It is a short work but beautiful music. Even though I had sent to the orchestra management a set of string parts with all the bowings marked on them, they turned up at rehearsal with the *Karelia Suite*. Fortunately I had conducted this work previously so it was no big drama.

There was some confusion one time in 1999 with an Asian Orchestra over the *Mendelssohn Violin Concerto*. I was unaware that he had written two. The popular one, in *E minor*, was in fact his second violin concerto. Mendelssohn had written one in *D minor* for a smaller string orchestra when he was only thirteen years of age. This early concerto was the one the Asian soloist had prepared. The score was not readily available for me so it required some extra research and study on my part to have it ready for this performance and I even found errors in the score.

The performance in Shanghai went exceptionally well.

There are also many published arrangements of standard repertoire music for different instrumental combinations, like wind band, wind orchestra, brass band, military band and accordion orchestras.

While conducting a top professional European wind orchestra of some sixty players in 1998, I found that the arrangement for this combination of the *Polovstian Dances* by Borodin, had been drastically abridged. The *London Suite* by Eric Coates was arranged in a lower key that was more suitable for transposing wind instruments. This can become a bit of a shock at the first rehearsal, especially when a conductor is using an orchestral score to work from and believe me, I can tell if the original key is in C and it is arranged in B flat for easier playing.

This wind orchestra replaced all its violins with clarinets, some twenty-four of them, violas and 'cellos were replaced with bass clarinets and saxophones. Normal wind, brass and percussion sections remained. Tubas did replace the contra bass section although they did have one contra bass playing.

This was a top line Military Wind Orchestra with very fine musicians who gave a wonderful concert, but during the concert there were a couple of 'moments of madness'. Possibly both my mistakes, one of them was definitely mine.

Brahms's *Hungarian Dance No. 5* is a favourite encore. I usually conduct this in a fast two beat per measure. For some unknown reason on the repeat to the beginning, I went into a slow one beat per measure, for a split moment, a moment long enough to throw the Belgian orchestra, who were not expecting it. The orchestra rocked for a moment with the unexpected. The audience would have noticed this one.

The other strange one that happened in this concert was in William Walton's *Crown Imperial Coronation March*. Just before the return to the main theme, there is a long sustained chord followed by loud, three beat, solo timpani, da-da-dum.

CONSERVATOIRE ROYAL DE BRUXELLES

VENDREDI 16 JANVIER 1998 - 20 H
VRIJDAG 16 JANUARI 1998 - 20 U



LE GRAND ORCHESTRE D'HARMONIE DES
GUIDES



HET GROOT HARMONIEORKEST VAN DE
GIDSEN

SOUS LA DIRECTION DE / ONDER LEIDING VAN
GARY DAVERNE
NOUVELLE-ZELANDE / NIEUWZEELAND

Bruxelles - Belgium

I glanced towards the player to cue him and he played one measure early, with confidence and energy. Once again the boat rocked momentarily and then went on as if nothing had happened. The timpanist just smiled at me. Scary, but we survived.



Mandolin Orchestras

Because as a conductor I am considered versatile with a wide range of musical tastes and experiences, I get the pleasure of conducting many different combinations from the youth orchestras, children's choirs (sometimes en masse), brass, wind, pipe and drum bands, many variations of accordion groups and, once, a mandolin orchestra.

In 2002 I was invited to be the music director for a week long International Mandolin Convention held in New Zealand.

The orchestra of some fifty players from all around the world was made up of twelve acoustic guitars, two contra basses and one accordion, with the remainder being mandolins.

I must admit that I knew very little about mandolins but I leant quickly after sitting down with a player who explained in detail the special characteristics and sounds of the instrument, plus I attended a rehearsal of a local mandolin orchestra. A good conductor should be able to conduct any situation providing he/she knows and understands the music being played and the nature and capabilities of the ensemble being conducted.

The mandolin is one of the earliest musical instruments and a descendant from the lute, which appeared as early as 2000 BC.

The mandolin can be best described as a small, short-necked lute with four pairs of metal strings tuned the same as the violin, the sound made by the strings vibrating. The strings are plucked with plectrums rather than the fingers. The plectrums or picks produce a louder, sharper sound than the fingers.

Contini published the earliest published composition for the mandolin in 1700. Major composers have all written for this instrument, Beethoven writing five pieces for mandolin and harpsichord.

In recent times, there has been a resurgence of interest in classical mandolin with some beautiful modern compositions written for the instrument and many young artists recording albums of classical mandolin music. It continues to be a popular and vital instrument in country music, British folk-rock and bluegrass, with 'unplugged' music showcasing the mandolin.

In a mandolin orchestra or ensemble, the mandolin is the equivalent to the violin playing in two parts. There is a mandola, a larger mandolin, playing viola parts, a mandocello and a bass mandolin. Guitars add a beautiful warm lower part, especially with arpeggios or playing 'cello lines'.

This mandolin orchestra had some very fine musicians and to conduct this group was a beautiful, unforgettable, enjoyable experience. The sound was unique, easy to listen to, sometime soft and gentle, other times fast and exciting. I loved the tremolo effects.

The players themselves were warm, friendly, fun people, enthusiastic and dedicated to their music and instruments. I found here a similarity with accordion players.

I remember one evening giving them all a workshop entitled "Playing in an Orchestra" – basically what a conductor expects from his players and what the players should expect from their conductor. The latter, unfortunately, frequently does not happen. Just ask any professional orchestra player.

These comments are from my point of view and work for me. I appreciate that they could be open to discussion, argument and contradiction.

“Playing in an Orchestra”

- a. The conductor’s point of view
- b. player’s point of view

CONDUCTOR’S POINT OF VIEW

Orchestral Discipline

Basic rehearsal rules:

Arrive to start on time.

Have your music and instrument ready and tuned.

Have a 3B pencil, eraser, earplugs and sound shields available.

Have fingerings, registers, switching and conductor’s instructions marked.

Do not try to remember instructions, mark them.

Never use felt tip or ballpoint pens.

Wear tidy comfortable clothing.

No food, gum or drink at rehearsals or taking time out for a ‘smoke’.

Turn off alarm watches, mobile phones and pagers.

Sit so you can see the conductor and music.

If late apologize and come in quietly.

Talking during rehearsal is not acceptable.

Questions are always welcome, discussion. **NEVER.** (Discussion takes place in private).

The conductor is the **BOSS.** His or her decisions are final, whether you agree or not.

Remember you are working as a team with a leader and section leaders.

If you cannot hear your desk partner you are playing **TOO LOUD.**

If there is a break for coffee or exercise do not take an extra five minutes.

Breaks at rehearsals are a silent time – no playing or practising.

Practice is done away from rehearsals.

PLAYER'S POINT OF VIEW

Determine where the conductor's beat is.
What the conductor considers soft or loud
Understand what the hand signals mean.
Try not to feel nervous or intimidated.
Play with confidence.
Play what you can.
Keep your eyes on the conductor or section leader (first chair).
Marking music - how to mark page turning, when to do it.
Photocopy difficult turns.
Division of parts - who plays top/bottom

WHAT PLAYERS SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE CONDUCTOR

To:
Know their scores.
Make his/her intentions clear.
Give clear direction, instructions and down beats.
Play more than talk.
Start rehearsals on time.
Keep rehearsals to time limit.
Not to yell at or argue with players.
Expect courtesies.

CONCERT PROCEDURE

Arrive in plenty of time to be relaxed and put conductor's mind at ease that you are coming.
Dress appropriately for the occasion.
No handbags on stage.
Enter in an orderly fashion.
Make sure your hair is neat, shoes polished, belt and socks the correct colour. Look good.
Remember posture (no legs crossed, watch what you do with your hands and fingers.)
Polish instrument.

No bright jewellery or reading books in long measure rests.
Acknowledge and enjoy accolades by facing the audience and not the conductor.

Look as if you are enjoying playing, are interested and remember that you are on show.

One complimentary (I assume) reply I once heard when asked, “How was the conductor?” “Oh! He didn’t get in the way too much.”

I personally try not to get in the way. Professional players generally know the music and their parts, especially with standard repertoire, better than the conductor.

Anyway, I emphasise that some conductors have special requirements and pet phobias for want of a better word other than musical. I personally require promptness, starting on time for rehearsals and concerts. Players should be seated, tuned and ready to play at the appointed starting time. The audience should be seated by the time the conductor enters the stage. I ask for the doors to be shut and no one admitted until the end of the first piece of music.

When living in London, as a student, I arrived three minutes late for a two act opera and I was locked out until the end of the first act, which lasted one and a half hours. I sat and watched it on a TV monitor, cursing London traffic. I learned the hard way.

I also mentioned to my attentive mandolin ‘work shoppers’ that I did not approve of handbags and the wearing of reflective, sparkling jewellery on stage - anything that would or could distract the audience from enjoying the music.

The next day the afternoon rehearsal was supposed to start at 1pm. By this time there were only a handful of players ready to play. Then one by one or two by two, they all drifted in swinging their handbags, sparkles and tinsel and some with flashing lights in their hair, long glittering dangling earrings and brooches, large flashy gaudy rings, bangles, beads and bracelets. They even put tinsel on my music stand as they sauntered past. They looked like a decorated Christmas tree.

Some of the spirited players had gone to the Two Dollar Shop at lunchtime to 'stock up'. I thought to myself "They love me, or is there a message here?"

It was a week long of hard rehearsals, but with lighter fun moments, rewarding and satisfying, all ending with a wonderful final concert - an experience for me to always remember. I have kept in touch with some of the players.

One evening in 1994, my friend Harley and I were at a private dinner function and to entertain us all throughout the evening was an American ragtime jazz pianist. He was certainly a 'clever' piano



David Paquette, Jazz with Strings Attached

player, sang well and was a wonderful, flamboyant entertainer. I would describe his musical style as a cross between Fats Waller and Errol Garner.

Harley suggested that perhaps this act could work with the symphony. I didn't discount the idea at all and as the evening progressed and after a few more glasses of wine, I knew that I could make this work. The idea developed, I orchestrated the necessary music for the symphony to accompany the solo jazz piano in *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Mood Indigo*, leaving a section in the middle for some free piano improvisation. Two concerts eventuated in December of that year, performing to capacity audiences and repeated the following year with similar success.

It was an interesting exercise that worked and I wanted to take the concept further.

Since 1992 over the Easter holiday break, Waiheke Island has hosted a Jazz Festival where the crème de la crème of New Zealand jazz musicians, along with great musicians from all over the world, come to perform.

Waiheke Island, a picturesque blend of farmland, forest, beaches, vineyards and olive groves, is situated in the Hauraki Gulf, just thirty-five minutes from downtown Auckland City by ferry, and boasts a subtropical climate with a beautiful one hundred kilometre coastline; an Island Paradise. Activities on the island include sightseeing, mountain biking, sea kayaking, vineyard and winery tours, with accommodation choices varying from backpacker hostels, holiday homes, motels, to luxury resorts.

Our American jazz pianist actually lived on the Island and had performed at the Jazz Festival with his trio since the Festival's beginning, so I formed a small string ensemble of twelve players, comprising violins, violas and 'cellos to accompany this jazz trio (the trio already had a bass player) to perform at the next Festival. Players were selected from various orchestras or freelance professionals especially for my new jazz string combo, 'Strings Attached'.

Jazz with Strings Attached as it was billed saw the light of day.

We played at the Waiheke Island International Jazz Festival for four consecutive years, sometimes featuring guest instrumental soloists. I won't say we were a sensation, but we were different, certainly a novelty, perhaps unique, and we were popular.

With instruments, we all caught a ferry across to the Island in the morning, had a brief sound check in the local hall, performed a late afternoon, early evening concert and caught an evening ferry back to Auckland. Some players chose to stay over for the three-day jazz festival.

Having experienced the success of *Jazz with Strings Attached* and having all the musical arrangements that I had specially written over the years for this ensemble, I decided to take it a stage further and instead of using just twelve strings, why not use the whole string section from the Auckland Symphony and perform a concert at the Bruce Mason Centre in Takapuna, one of our regular concert venues.

So 1998 saw *Jazz with Strings Attached*, a programme of ‘classic’ jazz standards with the Auckland Symphony Orchestra, happen as a successful annual event for the next three years. Unfortunately, but as can often happen, our American solo pianist became a little precious, demanding and difficult to work with. The fun had gone out of it for the orchestra and myself, it was all becoming too stressful, so I pulled the plug on the whole concept. It was good while it lasted but as we all know, good things rarely last forever and all that sheet music now just sits in my home music library.

“The song is ended but the melody lingers on” - Irving Berlin.

Thank you Harley, yet again.





ACT 4 (Scene 2)

Bits and Pieces - the Titbits

Soloists

Payola and the casting couch have been around for years and is still very much a feature of the music and entertainment industry. I know there is a belief that to be successful it is not what you know, but whom you know, but success can also depend on whom you sleep with or how big the cheque is.

I have had mothers who have offered the world to me, to have their young son or daughter perform with the orchestra or for me to record them.

In the Asian community small gifts usually accompany any audition, larger gifts if the audition turns into a concert performance. The gifts may take the form of a bunch of flowers, a box of cookies or chocolates, right up to a restaurant lunch or dinner.

As a record producer, I have experienced ‘would be’, ‘wanna be’, rising stars that would do almost anything to get into a recording studio and be able to cut a record.

So how do I choose my talent and soloists? Write me out a big cheque or show me your tits. Not likely. Angels fear to tread where fools rush in. Not that I am any angel, but I am also not a fool and good reputations can be destroyed overnight.

As mentioned, I choose soloists carefully, usually by referral and I refuse to work with difficult soloists, or those with a reputation for being difficult. I feel I don't have to put up with the egos,

bitchiness and tantrums that some talent parade, euphemistically refer to as ‘artistic temperament’, or in some cases from the parents that go with them.

I require auditions and there are many, many ways to audition someone.

Here is an example: In 2005 the Auckland Symphony performed a special symphony celebratory concert to honour our Patron’s 125 years in the retail piano and music industry. Lewis Eady Ltd is a family operated business and has been a major sponsor and supporter for many musical events, organisations, music schools, young talented soloists and charitable trusts over the years. It is now the oldest family owned and operated music business in Australasia and probably the Southern Hemisphere. The company has always focused on the sale of quality pianos, printed sheet music, classical instruments and in more recent years, guitars.

The Lewis Eady Charitable Trust sponsors the annual Auckland Junior Music Contest (with contestants all under the age of twelve) and in this year, a special prize was offered. The prize was to perform, as a special soloist, a movement from a concerto of his or her choice on a Steinway Concert Grand piano, at the 125 Year Celebratory Concert with the Auckland Symphony Orchestra at Auckland’s number one concert venue, The Aotea Centre.

There were ten finalists who indicated that they wanted to be considered for the Celebratory Concert and this was to be my choice. On the afternoon of the finals I took a couple of my trusted orchestra players with me to help in the final decision. One boy stood out for me. When I saw this boy perform, there was something about his posture that I liked. I did not know of him, nor his teacher or nationality. To me he was just a young Asian boy who played the piano quite well. He was in fact South Korean and had only been in the country a short time. His teacher at the time was, as it turned out, his mother. The competition was strong and the other members of my judging panel did not place him as number one, but they had no objection to my selecting him. This was comforting for me and interestingly enough, to this day, I have not heard anything of the other contestants.

I gave this young lad a few suggestions of what he could or should play and happened to mention that the first movement of the Grieg *Piano Concerto* was a favourite of mine. I left him to ponder on what he should play and perhaps discuss this with his teacher, not knowing at this stage that it was his mother. Remember, he was only eleven years of age.

About two weeks later he phoned me, to say that he had chosen the Grieg and had already memorized the first movement. Could he come around and play it for me? I must admit I was a little taken back. I looked at the score and wondered, “How were those little hands going to stretch those big chords in the opening section?”

He arrived at my home a few days later with his mother, who said very little and sat quietly on the couch and listened, perhaps because her English was not that strong. He sat, or should I say stood, at my piano, resting his backside on the piano stool, as his feet would hardly reach the floor. The opening of this concerto starts with the big chords at the top end of the piano and descends down the keyboard. As he played, his backside bounced and slid along the piano stool. I was amazed at what I was seeing and hearing as I followed the music score. The performance was not note perfect, but it was all there and from memory learnt in only a few weeks. I can still visualize this little boy playing my piano in my living room, a lovely experience for me. Needless to say he went on to perform a wonderful concert, loved and accepted by my orchestra and the audience. He had his twelfth birthday the week before the concert.

I know it is not Christian to believe in reincarnation, but I am a Christian and I do believe in reincarnation. While I was standing on the podium and conducting the Grieg *Piano Concerto* with my young prodigy as the soloist, I became mesmerized by the wonderful sound the piano was producing, another ‘moment of magic’. I turned and looked to the pianist and saw this young boy playing. “This is not possible,” I thought, “for a twelve year old to play like this. He has not accumulated the years. He doesn’t have the experience. Technically yes, but not with this maturity,

interpretation and feeling.” This was his first time playing with a symphony orchestra in concert. This was a time to believe in reincarnation, for me anyway.

This young South Korean lad went on to perform five concertos with my orchestra, win further competitions throughout the country and overseas, receive scholarships, gain a performance degree at Auckland University and become a New Zealand citizen. He has a great future ahead of him. Already he has performed in Carnegie Hall, New York.



There are occasions when I have had a soloist thrust upon me.

Once I received a call from a promotion company for a major telephone network. They were promoting “Make A Dream Come True” in conjunction with our top New Zealand netball team. People would submit their dreams, like, ‘I want to drive a big truck’, ‘fly a helicopter’, or ‘I want go to the moon’. You name it there was a ‘dream wish’ there. One of the chosen dreams was, “To play piano with a symphony orchestra in concert,” hence a phone call to me.

I thought that this was a good idea at the time and would oblige. “When in the new year do you want this to happen?” I asked.

“Oh no! It must happen this year.” was the reply.

Some people do not think their projects through thoroughly. If this production company had done their homework they would have known that orchestras usually have their programmes and soloists decided a good twelve months in advance.

I could hear the disappointment with my reply and was told that the twenty five year old young lady, who had won the wish, would be very upset.

I thought about this carefully for a few minutes and decided that I could 'slot' this in to an upcoming family concert, four weeks away and perhaps there was some mileage for the orchestra in this, so I agreed. I figured that this young lady was a reasonable pianist and would probably want to play a movement from a Mozart or Beethoven piano concerto. Wrong!

Coincidentally, it happened that she lived only three streets away from where I live. She came around to my home and I asked her what she would like to play for me. She told me that she had written some piano solos and could play *Für Elise* by Beethoven. The fact was, she was not really a pianist at all and she just played for fun.

Help! I have problem here.

Then she told me she could play Stanley Meyers' *Cavatina*, theme from the film, *The Deer Hunter*. I had made an arrangement of this for solo guitar and orchestra. She could play this and one of her own original compositions, which weren't too bad at all.

She was tall, attractive with long dark hair, a lovely smile, intelligent and spoke eloquently. She was 80% of the way there.

I could make this work for her I thought; make her dream come true. Things were to get worse.

She played well, with a listenable style and touch and there were no wrong notes, but as I quietly tapped my hand in time with her, I became aware that she had no sense of timing. Her rhythm was all free flowing. Sounded fine when she played by herself, as her friends had always told her and yes it did sound good, but how was I ever going to keep her in time with the orchestra?

As I pointed things out to her, I discovered that she didn't even have a piano to practise on where she was living. I must admit that by now, I was feeling a little uncomfortable about this whole venture, but I was determined to make this work.

So for the next few weeks she would come around to my place daily and play *Cavatina* over and over again with me standing beside her pounding the beat at her. I was giving her some very intense lessons on how to play the piano and keep in time. Was I winning? Well not really. It was hard work. There were times when I had her in tears and I felt very sorry and certainly sympathetic towards her, but we had a concert to perform in only a few weeks. She was a very determined woman herself, she wanted to make it work and of course so did I. At the first rehearsal I warned the orchestra of our 'little' problem of time. They were kind, accommodating and very warm to this young lady.

The concert? Well we got through it without a hitch. She looked stunning on stage, played well and the audience loved her. We made a fuss of her and the Bruce Mason Centre CEO acknowledged her to the audience and presented her with flowers. She was a 'star' that day; her dream had been fulfilled. Her performance was recorded, burnt to CD and presented to her for those lasting memories.

She turned twenty-six the day of the concert. We have stayed in touch over the years and yes; she still plays the piano and writes her own music.



One of my woodwind players in the orchestra established the annual New Zealand Woodwind Competition a few years ago, which has gone from strength to strength. To encourage the success of this competition, I offered as a prize to the winner for the open concerto section, two performances with the Auckland Symphony at two major concert venues, performing a concerto of their choice. In the past few years we have had some very talented young soloists.

This next one was not a soloist but certainly a ‘special guest’.

After one of my concerts, a youngish Chinese man came backstage to say hello to and embarrass me with compliments. In the course of conversation he told me that he was an artist and specialized in painting lions and tigers, to which I told him that I was born in the *Year of the Tiger* in the Chinese calendar. He responded that he would paint me a ‘tiger’ as a gift and a thank you for my musical contribution to the community. I thanked him graciously, gave him my contact details and never heard from him again for some eighteen months.

There was a knock on my door early 2005 and it was my ‘Tiger Man’, with my ‘gift’ and what a stunner it was! Mounted on a scroll, this tiger stood nearly three metres tall with Chinese calligraphy down one side, the eyes of the tiger following you as you walked passed. Delighted and impressed I was, so much so that I asked to see his other work, the ones that he had shown me pictures of in a glossy coloured brochure. I visited his home-cum-studio and his artwork was astounding. The paintings were larger than life some as large as a king-size bed. I had to stand on a chair to see some of them.

I had an idea. His work was great; there was certainly talent here no question about it, so why not combine an art exhibition of his masterpieces with a symphony concert? Now this would be something different. We could hold the art exhibition in the foyer of the concert hall, perhaps sell one or two pieces, get my brother out of retirement yet again to sing *Born Free* and *Can you Feel the Love* from *The Lion King*, while we screened a PowerPoint presentation of his tiger and lion paintings on the cyclorama behind the orchestra. I had in mind the ideal afternoon Family Concert, coming up in the not too distant future.

So it happened. The concert was a ‘roaring’ success. My ‘Tiger Man’ was acknowledged and presented on stage, there was a Mayoral reception, the media gave us excellent coverage and I think we did sell a painting. This ‘Tiger Man’ was very smart, he brought in a Chinese camera crew, who videoed the whole

proceedings, interviewed people and me and put together a documentary on his life and work, emphasizing the fact the he was being recognized and accepted in the Western world by people and organizations of prominent community standing. This was his promotional tool back in China. Today, he is one of China's most famous and prolific artists and has Art Galleries in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China, and in Auckland City, New Zealand.

He always introduces me as the first New Zealander and European to recognize his talent and introduce him and his amazing work, through music, to New Zealand and the Western world. Friends forever. He is a now a New Zealand citizen, resident in Auckland and works between New Zealand and China.



Audience Conductors.

I like to involve the audience, especially in my light or family-orientated programmes. I usually present the programmes from the podium. My own stage presentation and conducting style has often been likened to that of Arthur Fiedler of the Boston Pops Orchestra fame and also that of the British composer/conductor, Ron Goodwin. Perhaps, but certainly not consciously.

Leroy Anderson was an American composer/arranger who worked with the Boston Pops Orchestra in the time of Arthur Fiedler. Leroy Anderson composed many popular short, light orchestra pieces with fun characteristic titles, like *The Waltzing Cat*, *Sleigh Ride*, *Belle of the Ball*, *Bugler's Holiday*, *Blue Tango*, to name a few. I frequently choose his works for my family concerts, especially when I want audience participation. The *Syncopated Clock* is a prime example.

I do have a set procedure and patter when presenting this piece. Firstly, I play it through with the orchestra, then with the microphone in hand, I venture down into the audience, inviting someone to come up onto the podium and 'wave the white stick' in front of the orchestra, to the *Syncopated Clock*.

Audience reactions always differ. Some shy away, others enthusiastically wave their arms saying “choose me, choose me”, or offer the services of the person next to them. No! I don’t choose the prettiest girl in the audience. I can’t explain how or why I choose the person I do, but I can sense the right one as I walk amongst the audience. They don’t even have to be looking at me.

Once on the podium I introduce my ‘victim’ to the orchestra and audience, demonstrate the basics of conducting and explain something very important. “The tuba player is helping the percussion section out by playing the triangle to sound like an alarm clock. The tuba player cannot read triangle music, perhaps because the notes are triangle shaped (only joking) and will only play when pointed at and for as long as you remain pointing.”

We practise this a few times, sometimes pointing over my shoulder while talking to the audience, hoping that I have an attentive tuba player who will stand tall and hold the triangle up high and respond instantly.

Finally, I tell our new recruit “The orchestra never watches the conductor, so you must count, in English, in a loud clear voice, one, two, three, four, and with a bit of luck they may start playing. Don’t forget to bow at the end of the piece. Best of luck, I am going down into the audience to listen.”

With that I leave the stage, with someone, hopefully, in complete control.

The responses are as varied as they are entertaining. Some budding maestros ignored the poor triangle player altogether, others work them to death. Most have some sort of time sense but there are others who can quite happily beat three throughout the piece, which is in four. They wave like they are swotting flies with both hands. Occasionally, I find a left-handed conductor and some that are real showmen.

There was a one young ‘fella’ who stood there well poised and you could see him thinking “How do I get them started. I’ve

forgotten.” He pointed to the triangle player who responded. “Mmmm, that worked.” So then he pointed to a clarinet and the player also responded by playing something. He started pointing all around the orchestra with the players all responded individually.

“This is fun, but how do I get them playing together?” The concertmaster stood and whispered in his ear. A loud, almost shouted, enthusiastic, “one, two, three, four” was heard and the orchestra was underway. How slow or fast the count in was given does not matter because after the first chord, the percussion section on wood blocks, representing the ticking of the clock, set the tempo. They should know the tempo.

This young maestro took a bow, stood the orchestra and shook the concertmaster’s hand.

I don’t limit this bit of fun to just the younger people. I get all ages involved.

There was one concert in Dallas, Texas, where I chose quite an unassuming man, in his mid thirties, who turned out to be a laugh a minute. He mimicked all my movements, even pointing towards the triangle player over his shoulder. He told me to ‘watch my back, as he wanted my job’. He conducted very well and won audience approval.

Older people do seem to have more inhibitions, though, and can stand there on the podium frozen and scared to death.

One Mother’s Day Sunday afternoon concert I invited a ‘mum’ up to conduct the *Star Wars March*. She wanted her young daughter to go with her. Why not? Holding her daughter’s hand with her left hand, she took my baton, gave a down-beat and the two of them just stood there together, hand in hand on the podium, without showing any emotion or conducting movements.

The orchestra played on.

At the end she and her daughter left the stage without any acknowledgements.

After the concert she came up to me and thanked me for the experience of a lifetime for her. To stand so close and in front of an orchestra, to feel the energy, power, weight and sheer volume of sound that was produced by them, left her completely overwhelmed and stunned.



During my Mother's Day concerts I have always given a red rose to the mothers in the orchestra as an acknowledgement that they are giving up a family day to perform, and they place the roses on their music stands. How a rose ended up on a male 'cellist's music stand one concert, I am not quite sure, but it did.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Cats* was performing in Auckland soon after one Mother's Day concert, so I approached the show's management and told them in return for a few 'house' seat tickets, I could and would promote the show for them. Send over a couple of your cats in costume to slink around the audience before and after the show, I would play the song *Memory* from the show, the cats could come on stage, I would introduce them and tell the audience about the show.

Three cats in full costume turned up, two toms and a female. They were great, played their parts well; in fact, they were three of the lead actors from the show.

My associate conductor is on stage conducting the piece before I am to conduct *Memory* and to introduce the cats. I am standing offstage in the wings trying to stay focused. I say to my assistant stage manager, "There is a spare rose on the other side, could you get it for me and I will give it to the female cat." This he does and hands it to me just as I am about to re-enter the stage saying "I don't know why you are giving her a rose, because all cats do is 'piss' on them," chuckle, chuckle.

Memory was played, the cats slunk on to the stage, the female cat made up to me and I placed the rose stem in her mouth, a touch of *Carmen* here, I said all there was to say about the show and then with the microphone still in my hand I said to the cats “That’s it, now ‘piss off’ you cats.” I hear a loud “SH..” offstage from the stage manager.

“How could I have?” I asked myself. The last thing I heard before going on stage was that ‘P’ word and I guess it was stuck in my mind. There were a few repercussions, nothing too serious.

One of the viola players tried to comfort me by saying “I thought that was real clever of you to tell the cats to ‘puss’ off.”



Mistakes

Sometimes glitches occur that seem to be unexplainable at the time but ultimately the responsibility must fall on the conductor. Usually they are caused by tempo and time signature changes. Suddenly there is a sound that is not familiar or as it should be. Momentarily every player, including the conductor can be thinking, “Am I the one that is wrong?”

These moments, and they are only seconds of time, can seem like an eternity till they correct themselves – and they generally do, providing the conductor’s intentions are clear. If the beat is clear and in the correct place then there should be no real ‘moments of madness.’

Strange things can and do happen in a concert performance, mostly in encores.

Sometimes the mind can wander when everything is going well - dangerous and not to be recommended. I have often said that I rarely hear the good things that the orchestra play. I suspect it happens to the players also. I do know that they sometimes cannot hear the other sections of the orchestra. When I happened

to make a 'boo-boo' with my orchestra, I had a 'cellist in the front desk, who smiled and shook her head!

In one piece I have conducted many times, at a page turn the tempo changes from slow to very fast. I missed the change completely, but only momentarily as I caught up with the orchestra. The woodwind had saved me. They ignored my beat. Sound familiar? In another section, different concert, I missed a measure of four in a three beat slow section of long notes. This time the brass stayed with me and shortened the note. Some of the orchestra noticed.

Now about those encores: I have a few crowd pleasers that I use for encores where the audience can clap along. Perhaps it is because the concert is nearly over with the pressure off and the concentration is not as sharp, the orchestra has played well, the applause, accolades and flowers have been received and the audience is standing and calling for more, that is when the 'dings' usually occur, even though I know the music thoroughly and rarely need to use a score.

In the Hall of the Mountain King from *Peer Gynt* is a favourite encore number. In one concert, I announced that we were going to play, (like I usually do, presenting my programme from the podium), set the tempo in my own mind, turned to the 'cellos and gave a downbeat. Nothing happened. After four counts I turned to the bassoons, which should also be playing. They are sitting there, smiling at me. Back to the 'cellos I turn. I have conducted three measures without any sound. I am trying to stay composed and wondering what is wrong, as is the audience I suspect. The front desk of 'cellos decide to play, the remainder of the section joining in and finally the *Hall* is under way, with some very strange looks from the players. Me? I am still wondering what the problem was. Players in the sections are instructed not to play unless their leader does, hence the hesitation from the rest of the section. The bassoons join in and towards the end of the first eight bars of music the horns play. It is then that I realise my mistake. The horns start *In The Hall of the Mountain King* with a sustained note. The bassoons and the 'cellos were waiting for this note.

Gary had forgotten - the danger of relying on one's memory and not using a score. I was more intent on getting the tempo correct.

At the repeat concert when it came to encore time, I turned to the 'cellos and they were all smiling and pointing towards the horns, as were the bassoons.

There was another concert, another orchestra and again, *In the Hall of the Mountain King*.

This time with a small regional amateur orchestra, whose enthusiasm grossly outweighed any musical ability they had and who would insist on playing music far beyond their capabilities. There were one or two good players, but for the remainder there were some major gaps in their technique. Don't even ask why I agree to conduct some orchestras. It is certainly not for the money. I think it is because of this enthusiasm that the players have.

The concert had gone as well as could be expected, perhaps even better. I did remember to cue the horns this time. I was using a score – couldn't be too confident with these players. One horn mis-pitched the note and the second horn that had played the correct note, stopped. The two clarinets were playing 'cello cues, to help this weak section out. One clarinet forgot to change from A to B \flat clarinet, so we had two clarinets playing the melody a semitone apart, neither knowing which was correct because nothing they were playing related to the previous horn note. Forget the 'cellos, who knows what they were doing. These are situations a conductor has no control over. The percussion section played louder and we all did end together and there was applause at the end, possibly because we had finished. The local critic wrote in the next day's newspaper review, 'something like enthusiastic noise can hardly be called music'.

Lord of the Dance is a great Irish River Dance, lively, foot-tapping music and a real crowd-pleaser. Usually I repeat a section at the end as an encore. There is the shorter section from bar 151 or there is the longer section from bar 115. Similar numbers.

The orchestra played the shorter version except for the trumpets. They played the longer version, but did manage to get there by the final bar. Not quite sure how. I like to use Irish tap dancers when we perform this music. Sometimes their taps can be louder than the orchestra, providing an interesting situation if their taps don't synchronize with the percussion in the orchestra. The audience love it.

I am not the only one that 'stuffs' up!

There was one concert where I repeated the *Thunderbirds March*, which we had played earlier in the programme, as an encore. The audience demanded more and, believe me; you can tell when they really want more.

Now at the beginning of the *Thunderbirds*, the strings have a loud, frantic, eight measure arpeggio figure, before the trombones come in with full force playing the melody. On this occasion, the section decided to play in their full glory, after only four measures. The trumpets know they come in four measures after the trombones, so they don't need to count. The horns then play two measures after the trumpets, followed by the woodwind and percussion. So no one counts. No need to, so they think. There is now a four-measure difference between them and the strings, and of course, the harmony changes. I managed to get through the *Lord's Prayer* twice before the strings caught up, after about four beats and, would you believe, not many in the audience that I asked had even noticed.

The Percussion Section

Percussionists are very important in my orchestra because of the type of music we play. They usually are placed at the back of the orchestra and when they are in action, all eyes can be on them.

Here are some instances that I remember quite vividly.

The percussionist stood up, he moved the tam tam (gong) and tried to unhook the string of the mallet from its hanging position. It was twisted.

By the time the untwisting had been sorted, the time to play had passed. He looked at me in dismay. I indicated and cued a loud crash, a few bars later. It didn't sound wrong, only different. I thought, how embarrassing for him to stand up with the audience watching and not play anything. I can fix that.

Triangles are usually held in the fingers and can swivel around if one is not careful. This timpanist had an extra important triangle part to play. There was a look of concentration on his face as he struck the triangle, only to find that it was not in the position he thought it was. The beat was missed. His look of concentration changed to one of shocked horror, but it was amusing for me to watch.



ASO percussion section members performing, The Typewriter

In a concert with a top European orchestra the side drummer dropped his sticks on to the wooden floor at the end of the overture - didn't even drop them on the beat. This sort of happening can wreck a good performance and what can a conductor do? Dock his pay?

The percussion section is usually the first to arrive for a concert to 'set up' all their equipment, especially in the popular concerts that I present. They are generally kept very busy during the performance. Apart from the usual standard percussion instruments, they also have a 'bag full of tricks'; the sound effects, that many composers write for. There are various types of whistles, horns, hooters, bells and anything that can be hit to make a sound, like the brake drum off a car or a slab of iron for the *Anvil Chorus*. In my composition *Gem of the Kaipara, for Solo Accordion, Strings and Percussion*, I scored for 'frogs' in the opening atmospheric section, setting the river scene in the early morning mist. There is a percussion instrument called a frog. It is made of wood, hollow, in the shape of a frog (of course and green) with grooves cut on the top and when these are scraped the sound produced is similar to that of a frog croaking.

We were performing *The Pops Hoedown*, requiring many different sound effects from the percussion section. They meticulously placed the squawkers, swannée whistles etc. in positions that they could get to easily during the piece. This can and does take time to set up.

The concert had gone well (would I expect anything else?) we had played our one encore and the audience was screaming for more. Normally I would have said, "That's it," and left the stage. This one time I didn't and I am not too sure why. I quickly decided on the extra encore and announced to the audience and the orchestra that we would play again the final section from the *Pops Hoedown*. I then saw this panicked, horrified look on the percussion section's faces. They had surreptitiously packed away all their musical effects. It was heads down, bums up, as I talked to the audience for several minutes while they got their 'act' together. Sorry guys, how was I to know?

There was another time when I was conducting a small regional amateur orchestra and we were performing in a local church on a Sunday afternoon, a very warm and intimate setting for a concert. There were two percussionists in the orchestra, an older woman and a young man, both very competent.

On the programme was Leroy Anderson's *The Sandpaper Ballet*, another of his descriptive pieces this time featuring the percussion as soloists using sandpaper to play rhythmical passages.

I was asked by the percussionists if I could play before their item, a piece that did not involve them, so we played a beautiful Mozart *Serenade*. I had no idea what they were up to, didn't ask, wasn't told, but they knew me and we had worked together before. So I announced them, they came from the back of the church to the front of the orchestra (no stage here in this church), wearing workmen's overalls and hard hats, carrying a workbag and a danger roadside cone. They sat down, took out from their workbag drink flasks, what looked like their lunch, a newspaper, some tools, some sandpaper and blocks of wood. I just stood there and watched with my mouth open. They were certainly upstaging me. They stood and started discussing and demonstrating to the audience, the different sounds that could be made by the different grades of sandpaper when they were rubbed together. These two were a 'hoot' then the woman turned to me and asked, "Can we have some music please Maestro?" I thought she knew my name.

The Sandpaper Ballet was being rhythmically sanded away. At one stage they put down the sandpaper, picked up the newspaper and tore it into strips in time and rhythm to the music. My brother used to do that in his singing act many years ago, I thought. *The Sandpaper Ballet* was a hit.

Leroy Anderson also wrote *The Typewriter*, another descriptive piece of fun music involving the percussion section as soloists.



I often get more pleasure from rehearsing than from the performance itself. In rehearsals you can relax a bit more and you can have fun while at the same time ensuring that you approach the job professionally. For me, a key part of rehearsal enjoyment is hearing a piece take shape as the players and their conductor become more familiar with its content, characteristics and challenges.

Over the years I have collected and used a few sayings that other conductors have uttered. I have, of course, my own comments, like to the violins playing pizzicato: “You sound like banjos” or “Please take your gumboots off.” I have sometimes been known to comment on the first run through, “I don’t recognize any of this music yet,” or perhaps, “Yes, I did recognize some of it. Can we try it again and as you’re all fishing, can you try to catch a few more notes this time around?”

A conductor will often describe a situation to explain how they would like the music to be played, comments not to be taken with offence.

“The Moldau starts as a bubbling brook not a West Coast surf beach.”

“This is meant to be a dream not a nightmare.”

“Second violins, you really needed to play third cornet in the local brass band for a few years to play those off beats steadily.”

“If you don’t have enough bow, get a longer bow.”

I try not to frown at the players if a mistake occurs during a performance. If I do, they’re likely to make more mistakes. Mistakes come and go and we are all human.



Sometimes people forget that you actually have a personal life and if something has gone wrong on the domestic front and it’s still in your mind, it can affect your performances. Mindful that the show must go on, I’ve done concerts where I have been coughing and spluttering right through the whole performance. I have to get up there and do it and in the whole time of 36 years with my orchestra I have never missed one rehearsal night or a performance because of sickness. You are in charge. You have to go. You can’t ring up another conductor and ask him to fill in for you.

I have a strict rule: 'No rehearsal, no concert' and this is inflexible. I know that some regard my strict rules as a virtue, like no handbags on stage or women wearing trousers and certainly no sparkling jewellery. My 'benevolent dictatorship'.



I have been told, that before a concert I can be a little difficult to live with (although, apparently I have mellowed with the years).

The day of any Auckland concert I do little jobs around the house, like fix things that have needed fixing for weeks.

My favourite quirk was to clean the turtle tank. Did I not mention that I have had pet terrapins (fresh water turtles) for over thirty years? I have no idea why turtles, but I found my first turtle on the side of the road. Turtles are not native or wild in New Zealand. This one had escaped from somewhere.

This was an Australian Snake Neck Turtle and was to be the first of many that I kept, some outliving their life expectancy by many years. Friends would give me 'turtle collectables' of varying shapes and sizes, as gifts, from soft toys to expensive crystal turtles. Oh no! Not another dust collector!

I have always had a fascination for, and kept, goldfish. They're very relaxing to have at home. You don't keep them with your turtles though. Turtles love goldfish. Not a pretty sight to watch.

Before a concert I try to remember what I preach – to have fun and not take things too seriously. I am thankful that I do not have a symphony concert every week. It was different when I was conducting musical theatre. Once the season started it just meant keeping a tight rein on the performances.

But before an orchestral concert there is a certain amount of anxiety. I think there has to be. There never seems to be enough rehearsal time. I often feel that I would like another hour or two to tidy up a few things. Fortunately, much of the 'tidying up' occurs in concert, but not always.

I have an embarrassing, unfortunate habit: I usually get dressed in concert attire about fifteen to twenty minutes before the concert starts. I dress alone, so I can prepare myself mentally for the concert. When the bow tie and jacket go on, I am totally focused on the music and the task at hand. For some unknown reason, when I put my trousers on, I would frequently forget to do the fly zipper up. Sometimes I do remember to check, do what is called, an XYZ check. Examine Your Zipper. I have been known to conduct many a concert, record TV interviews and meet important people, all with a zipper down. I have not noticed my dilemma sometimes until I have gone for a 'nervous pee' during an interval. Perhaps I need to write myself a reminder note or get my stage manager to check me out. Thank goodness for long jackets and a cummerbund.



I have 'coined' a few nicknames over the years. My close friends in the music industry called me "Gazza". My former wife's family called me Hoki because I would say, "Hokay, let's go!" "Ernie" hung around for a while. I guess from Davernie – Ernie. I have no idea why I was called Gerald for a period of time. A few called me Sir Gazz, when I received my ONZM.

I still prefer to be called Gary. In South East Asian countries they frequently call me Mr Gary. I like that. In fact I have a soft spot for the Asian countries. They always think I am fifteen years younger than my real age. I like that as well. The young girls (and not so young ones) want to have their photo taken with me. They say I am a 'handsome man' and I've received a proposal or two. Now, that cannot be all bad! I think it is my silver beard or my hairy arms. (I have 'mats' or 'rugs' on my arms they will say).

'Maestro' is not uncommon with foreign orchestras. Saves them having to remember my name.



I believe that all those in the entertainment business need feedback and acknowledgement, not for the ego building that

some entertainers thrive on, but more as a measure of success and achievement and acceptance that you are doing it right. At the top professional level you are expected to ‘get it right and compliments can be rare. I have found that orchestra members can be quite shy and private about commenting on performances, conductors and soloists.

I have been with some orchestra players who have been quite uncomplimentary about conductors in front of me or while standing in a group, while I am quietly thinking to myself, “Easy, guys, I am a conductor.”

Everyone, even musicians, appreciate praise. I can acknowledge what the players do with a good solid smile or sometimes a ‘thumbs up’. The audience doesn’t always see this because it’s in front of my body.

Over the years I have certainly had doubts about my own abilities and direction but then I look at the whole picture and see successful concerts with repeated capacity-filled concert halls, an orchestra and management that looks and sounds happy with proceedings and I think that I must be doing something right. I guess someone will tell me if I’m not.

Sometimes members of the listening audience take the trouble to send you a letter or email giving you appraisal and thanks which is lovely to receive.

At one recent Christmas concert cameras were flashing during the performance. I commented to the audience “Now to all you people who know you are not allowed to take photos during this concert, if you get any good ones would you please email me a copy!” I received several good photos including one of me conducting with Santa Claus.



ACT 4

(Scene 3)

Being in the Public Eye

I never ever set out to be rich and well known. It just happened along the way as I went about doing what I enjoyed doing.

Being recognisable in the public eye has its advantages and disadvantages.

Personal behaviour, grooming and attitude are important just in case you are recognised by one of your adoring fans. You cannot afford to let yourself down.

I was coming through New Zealand Customs after an overseas holiday with my former wife. Oh yes, I was married, but we had no children by choice. She was a terrific teacher and a fine acoustic guitarist and would accompany me when we were performing my school musicals. We also composed several children's musicals together.

On this day, Customs were very slow as several planes had arrived together and the queues were long. A senior customs officer walked down the line to us and asked for our passports and took them away to check.

“Will you two come with me please,” he said on returning and indicated to the checking officer that this was in order.

We didn't say a word, but we were both wondering, why us? What had we done? Our stomachs were churning over a little.

When through the gates the senior officer said to us, “I had to check that I did have the right people. I have seen you perform

many times at the school where my children attend. You don't have to go through all this customs nonsense. On your way, my pleasure."



One Christmas holiday, I was staying in the 'back of nowhere', camping. I was washing dishes in the camp kitchen, when a surprised voice from a woman walking past the kitchen window exclaimed, "Oh, it is the conductor of the Symphony Orchestra. Hello".

Her vision of me was of a well-groomed man, standing tall, wearing a white jacket, bow tie and waving a little white stick in front of a big orchestra and a large audience in a major concert hall. Not someone washing dishes, barefooted and without a shirt on, looking a little un-kept. Me, in my á la naturale state.



One day, I walked into a bank to cash a cheque and the teller told me that identification was not necessary, as she knew who I was.

"Do I know you?" I asked.

"No, but you are the conductor of the Auckland Symphony Orchestra and write music for the accordion. My husband plays the accordion."

You never know when your familiar face will be recognised.



There was an occasion when I had to appear at a Tenancy Tribunal court hearing, trying to get rent money from a 'wayward' tenant. The court magistrate paid little attention to me, he was

more concerned with the tenant, who was quite aggressive and sounding off in frequent Anglo Saxon four letter expletives. The tenant was in the wrong; he knew it and was given a twenty-four hour eviction notice. He stormed out of the courtroom, angry and abusive, leaving a stunned silence in the courtroom with the court magistrate, his clerk and I just looking at one other.

The court magistrate broke the silence by saying, “And how is your orchestra going? My wife and I attend most of your concerts.”

I must admit I was a little taken back, but responded by telling him there was actually a concert the following Sunday afternoon at the Town Hall.

That following afternoon, before the concert, as I was walking outside the Town Hall, who should I just happen to meet?

“Ah! Mister Daverne. We meet again, this time on the other side of the bench in much more pleasant circumstances.”



In July 2011, I represented New Zealand as President of the six-member International Jury at the famous Sata-Hame Soi Accordion Festival in Ikaalinen, Finland, the other jury members coming from Italy, France, Russia, Finland and the USA.

The Primus Ikaalinen is an annual, major, National TV Entertainment Music Competition, broadcast live to over a million viewers. It featured eight young accordion competitors, representing their countries of France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Finland, Portugal, Russia and America, at the highest of levels. Unbelievable talent. I was a national TV star for a night and a day and found it most interesting to have people recognizing and acknowledging me on the street, in restaurants and in shops for the next few days.

A man in the changing rooms of the Resort Spa, where I was staying, asked me,
“What country do you come from? I saw you on telly last night, missed where you came from and couldn’t recognize the accent. America?”

‘No!’

“England?”

“No! New Zealand.”

“Oh!” Like, where is that place?

On a short cruise to St Petersburg, a few days later, a man came up to me and asked, “Did you teach me English in my younger years? I recognize you from somewhere.”

I replied, “Were you watching television last week?” Then the penny dropped.



While checking in on an international flight, out of Auckland, the Customer Service Manager, asked me how my ‘world of music’ was?

He seemed to know me, but I had no idea who he was.

I talked to him briefly before boarding the aircraft to take my seat at the back of ‘cattle class’ where musicians usually travel when they pay for the airfare themselves.

He came down the back of the plane and checked with me to see if everything was all right. I thought ‘this is good service from’, still not knowing who he was.

He gave me his card and told me that if I needed anything just ask.

So I did. “How is the seating up the front of the plane? Any spare seats?”

“I will check.”

He returned and said, “Follow me.”

I sent him an email from my destination and thanked him for the upgrade.

He replied saying, “I suppose you are wondering who I am? I went to the college while you were teaching there and I was actually in one of your music classes for one period a week although you never knew me. They were great and I remember them well. Any time for an upgrade, make contact. I will if I can.”

And I did for many years while he worked for that airline.



People are always saying hello to me or acknowledging me. They might say, “Oh, I am in the choir that you conducted last year,” or “I am so and so’s partner. “

I am meant to know and remember all these people, so if I see someone who looks familiar I always smile at them in case I know them.

One time, in my younger years, I parked my sports car in the downtown central Auckland city area and overstayed the street-parking limit by some thirty minutes. I knew for certain that I would have a parking ticket.

When I returned to my car, I saw that the street was papered with parking tickets. My car did not have one. That was a surprise.

As I climbed into my car a voice called, “Mister Daverne, I presume?”

It was a traffic officer, who was an ex-student of mine from a boys' high school where I had previously taught.

“I recognised the car,” he said, “and still as dirty as ever. Thought I would wait and say hello.”

I thanked him and thought to myself, “You will never make a good cop, you are too soft.”



Usually it is good to catch up with past students.

There was one time when I was walking down the street of a shopping area in Auckland, when a young man approaching me stopped and said, “Bloody Daverne. You caned me at school and I didn't do it.”

So we had a cup of coffee together, ‘chewed over the fat’ since our ‘school days’ some twenty years ago and ended up working together on a couple of music projects related to his art gallery.



After my concerts I like to go into the foyer of the concert hall and mix with the audience, even though sometimes I am hot, sweaty and tired. I have found that the audience like to see you close up and talk to you. It's kinda nice to receive their personal accolades and praise.

I meet up with a cousin whom I only see at my concerts. “We must catch up and have dinner together sometime soon.” Of course we never do but it's lovely that he supports me by coming to my concerts.



Now believe this! I was away for the weekend at a holiday beach house. I had spent the morning fishing and had come home early because the fishing was not good, only catching a few small ones. As I approached the door of the house, I heard the phone ringing. I dropped my fishing tackle and raced inside to answer the call.

“Gary Daverne?”

“Yes!”

“Radio New Zealand here. I am just checking that the line is clear for your interview. You are on air in five minutes.”

I had completely forgotten that a radio ‘live to air’ interview had been scheduled on National radio for that morning about upcoming concerts. It was just as well the fish were not biting and I was not completely in the public eye, only the listening side of it. My audience would not have wanted to see me in my old fishing clothes and stinking of fish and fish bait.



Once again in my younger years as a musician, musical people and institutions had difficulty in accepting and understanding the fact that I was involved and successful in the pop, jazz and classical world of music, all at the same time.

My academic contemporaries frowned upon the fact that I enjoyed and wrote pop songs, film music, radio and television jingles and soundtracks. I was considered to be ‘prostituting’ my talent for the sake of the dollar. Perhaps, but I was making a good living from writing music and getting valued experience as a studio orchestra conductor and lived in a great part of Auckland

My music was at least being played and recognised. I was a very much ‘in form’ composer, arranger and conductor. I stopped counting the number of TV/radio jingles I had written when

the figure reached six hundred. The many musical orchestral arrangements I wrote for television shows were in the hundreds. More to the point, I was getting paid for being an arranger/composer and conductor.

In later years the non-acceptability in certain musical circles did not matter as I had achieved in most musical areas and crossover was far more acceptable.

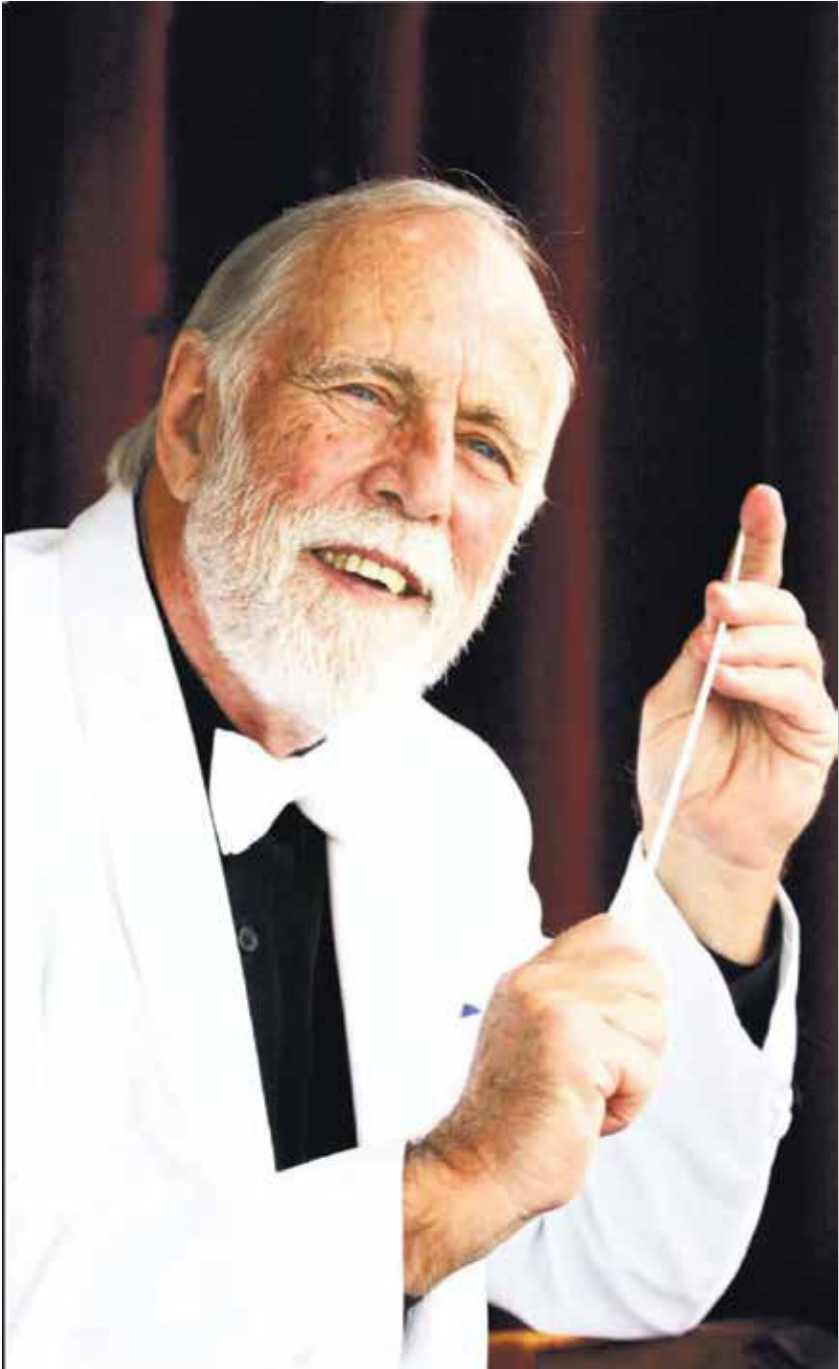
I still maintain that the years I spent as a rock ‘n’ roller and a jazz pianist, helped me to understand rhythm and the ‘feel for music’ more than any of my so called ‘classical or academic’ training.



*Identical twins, Angelina and Gabriella Witten Hannah,
singing with the ASO.*

“My wife and I have been to many of the Auckland Symphony Orchestra’s concerts and we have always commented afterwards about the exciting reactions that the audiences have had to the concert and the type of music the orchestra has played. It is probably fair to suggest that a large proportion of the audience are not ‘classical buffs’ but they universally leave with a smile on their faces having listened to anything from Beethoven to the Beatles - albeit probably only one movement of an otherwise long piece.” – Kay and John.





FINALE

Maestro the Composer Music composed by Gary Daverne

Composer in Schools.

In 1978, while on the teaching staff at an Auckland College, I spotted an unusual new position advertised in the Education Gazette - *Composer in Schools*. I could continue to teach but instead of economics and accountancy, I would be paid to compose music for schools. My work at TVNZ had enabled me to combine my talents for arranging and orchestrating pop music and, in many cases, conducting the studio orchestra.

Hi Ya Messiah had also given me the chance to develop my talents as a composer. After careful consideration, I decided to apply for and won the position – I was to be *Composer in Schools* for one year and would work with staff and children, composing music.

What quickly became apparent from my initial meeting with heads of music departments was that they wanted a school musical. Musicals had a number of attractions for teachers – they provided a mutually beneficial link between music and drama and involved large numbers of children who could participate in a wide variety of roles on stage, in the orchestra or in support areas such as lighting, costuming, makeup and promotion.

I am often accused of calling musicals that I have co-written ‘my musical’.

I am not making any apologies here because I liken it to comments one can make like: ‘my’ bank or that was ‘my’ school that was featured in the whatever...

I must add here the importance of a good lyricist or scriptwriter. I have worked with a few, some were great, the others were just, “I want to be a song writer,” or “I’ve written these great words, do you think that you could put some music to them?” Believe me, there are rules to writing lyrics just as there are rules to writing music. Please go away and learn them. Good librettists can be hard to find and without one, you cannot have a successful musical or song.

‘My’ or should I say ‘our’ musicals were a great success and I have acknowledged my fine wordsmiths in brackets; musicals thirty-five years later that are still performed by schools throughout New Zealand and, in some cases, overseas. They included: *Cats of Ponsonby* (Rae Prowse), *Gypsy Girl* (Ruth Hamilton), *Robyn Hood: Warrior Princess* (John Reynolds), *Tales of Panapa (Mountain Fairies and The Floating Island)* (Rosemary Cranswick and Phil Mark), *The Brothers Three* and *Young Mozart* (Rosemary Cranswick and Janet Grierson) and *Tiddalik the Frog* (Cheryl McDonnell).

There were many other short musicals I composed in conjunction with my students, performed successfully at the time in their schools but then forgotten about. I also wrote many ‘stand alone’ songs, with the assistance of my wonderful wordsmiths, for the children to sing and they were published in a book called *How About Singing*. Many of ‘my’ songs were used in an educational publication called *Music Kit* and are still being sung in the schools today. It is quite a ‘buzz’ to be at a friend’s place and to hear the children outside playing and singing one of your songs.

With librettist Dorothy Tomlinson over a recent period of some fifteen years, we wrote a two-act opera *Man With A Mission – John Hobbs*. John Hobbs was a Wesleyan Missionary who came to New Zealand from England in 1823. Set in the Bay of Islands in the north of New Zealand, it tells his story up until the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. This was a real labour of love but *Hobbs*, as we affectionately called it, had several workshop productions with moderate success using amateur performers and only piano accompaniment. After many rewrites (thank goodness for computers) we are now happy with it, I only need to orchestrate

the entire work. This would be a major time consuming task and could there be a theatre production at the end of it all, who would know?

I did extract one of the songs from the opera, the *New Zealand Song*, publish it, orchestrate it and perform it on several occasions with my orchestra and choirs. The *New Zealand Song* is an anthem-like patriotic song that has proved very popular with choirs throughout New Zealand. It has been recorded several times, translated into Maori and also arranged in the barbershop style, not by me I must add. The Waikato Rivertones presented the *New Zealand Song* at an International Sweet Adelines Competition held in San Antonio Texas in 2007. The outcome of this was they were announced the winners of the competition and were the first New Zealand chorus to achieve this success, in fact the first chorus outside the US or Canada to win an international title. Congratulations Waikato Rivertones - and with 'my' song.

Rest assured that the lyricists and librettists that I have co-written with have my highest respect and regard. Without them the musicals would never have happened. For myself, I am a terrible lyric writer, so I say a big thank you to all those wonderful wordsmiths that I have collaborated with over the years, in writing songs and musicals and acknowledge some wonderful songs we have written together.

While my melodies are my own, I do have my own perspective on originality. I don't believe there are any real original melodies left to write, they just sound slightly different in the way that they're played or harmonized.

Composers constantly influence other composers. To illustrate this point, I recall arranging Ravel's *Bolero* for a youth wind orchestra. On playing it back on my computer, I thought, "That sounds vaguely familiar – oh, it's *Memory* from Lloyd Webber's *Cats*."

I freely admit that other composers in turn influenced me. Sometimes when I'm orchestrating and I want a particular sound, perhaps a John Williams' orchestration for example, I might get out one of his scores, have a look at what he's done and then use

the basic idea in one of my own arrangements – which is only copying his style not his music.

I may not have even been aware of the quality of my orchestral compositions. Years later, writing in a *CANZONA* magazine, Geoffrey Hinds reviewed my first orchestral composition, *Highbury Grove*. Acknowledging the influence of Edward Elgar and Vaughan Williams he wrote, ‘I was fascinated by the oscillating woodwind thirds in the contrasting lyrical passages and also by the use of fugato – a rare device in the works of this composer who is predominantly market driven... After listening to this work I could only regret that the composer has not written more works of this calibre.’

Of course more orchestral works did follow and I hope I put Geoffrey’s regrets to rest.

My role as *Composer in Schools* was highly successful for me and for those with whom I worked. Not only did I produce a large range of original compositions, mainly songs, but I also had the pleasure of working with other writers, teachers and pupils and in many cases seeing the works performed in front of large appreciative audiences. Many performances I played piano for or conducted myself.

As a teacher and a composer, I also enjoyed watching the young performers respond and grow as they participated in the musicals – often for their first time.

While I was *Composer in Schools*, I had a young eleven-year-old student who was a very competent musician. He could play many instruments, but really was excelling on the piano. He was with my composition group for two years.

About 10 years later, I was Musical Director (one of a few times) for ‘my’ own musical, *Robyn Hood: Outlaw Princess*. This is a fantasy story, rock musical, about a female Robin Hood and HER band of female outlaws, living it up in Sherwood Forest, at the expense of the tormented Sheriff of Nottingham - a real fun show.

Playing in the orchestra for me was this young pianist who had been my student ten years previously.

What a surprise and a thrill I got when I heard him play. He sounded just like me playing the piano, only so many, many times better. My piano playing of ten years earlier had influenced him so much that he had copied my style of ‘pop/rock’ piano playing. I took that as one big compliment.

When John Reynolds and I wrote *Robyn Hood: Outlaw Princess* we coined the name, ‘poperetta’. We felt that it was more a ‘pop’ opera than a ‘rock’ opera. Unfortunately the name did not catch on so we reverted back to it being a ‘rock opera’. It was and still is a successful piece of musical theatre.

As some of the newspaper critics commented:

Poperetta ‘*Robyn*’ has obvious talent – Napier Daily Telegraph.

‘*Robyn*’ a credit to the whole team – Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune

Poperetta like a pantomime – Dominion

Audience captivated by ‘*Robyn*’ – Ashburton Guardian

Poperetta has lively pace – Taupo Times

During my days as *Composer in Schools*, the young students affectionately called me Mister ‘D’. This has carried on over after school days with past students I meet up with.

One I did meet up with was a youngish woman who came up to me after a symphony concert and said, “Do you remember me? I played the lead role in your first production of *Robyn Hood: Outlaw Princess*.” She was a sixteen-year-old schoolgirl actress at the time and *Robyn* was written for her girls’ high school in Auckland and premiered by them.

Of course I remembered this young woman. She was a fine young actress and very talented. I often wondered if she had continued with a stage or theatre career.

She continued to say, “This is my ten-year-old daughter. She is playing the lead in your *Cats of Ponsonby* musical.”

At least I know that the acting has carried on in the family. It doesn’t half make me feel old when she says, “This is my ten-year-old daughter”.

I enjoyed the *Composer in Schools* position and I was reappointed for a further year, but my leave of absence from the College I used to teach at was not extended so I decided that I would leave teaching altogether and concentrate on music. I was in my early 40’s. By this stage in their lives, many of the famous composers had already died, but for me this was to be a new beginning.

Enter the world of jingles and film music. It was also around this time that I was developing the Auckland Symphony Orchestra.

While I was *Composer in Schools*, I inherited a local youth orchestra to conduct. Someone seemed to think that I had the time and that I was the right man for the job. The orchestra had in it some very fine players, a few ending up playing with the Auckland Symphony.

There was certainly a lack of orchestral discipline right across the board. This I sorted out very quickly but with the exception of four young ‘cellists, who should have really been in a junior string group. I just couldn’t seem to stop them talking or ‘fiddling around’ and generally being downright nuisances. So I decided that I would audition the whole orchestra, using the section leaders from my own orchestra to assist. These four young ‘cellists didn’t turn up for my audition so the problem was solved. As it was an open audition for any newcomers I did discover some new talent.

I stayed with that orchestra for two years, forming a junior string orchestra as a feeder group to the main Youth Orchestra, but I found that being the music director of two orchestras and with my own orchestra at the same time was a little too stressful for me, especially around concert times when I called for extra rehearsals.



Reba Productions shop display of Gary's printed music.



CURTAIN CALLS

Farewelling Maestro Gary Daverne. (ASO Dinner - November 21st 2010)

Extracts

These are extracts from the Auckland Symphony Orchestra's Dinner, reprinted.

“Under some circumstances, it could be risky to ask musicians for an opinion about a conductor. One recalls that an opera singer who didn't like the conductor Thomas Schippers was asked who was conducting her next season. She replied “Pommas Shitters.”

Fortunately this was not the case when members of the ASO were invited to give their opinions about the conductor who has been with them for thirty-five years. Only very encouraging and complimentary comments flowed in.

Here are a few random samples:

One player has memories of early concerts being performed at St. Mary's, where ‘there was a great incentive to improve your playing so you moved forward – because when you moved forward you didn't have to twist around to see the conductor from behind a pillar.’

Another recalls that: “Gary was the first conductor in my experience to talk to the audience, in a friendly and chatty style that made the audience feel part of the performance. He doesn't talk down and the audiences love it. It keeps them coming back time after time.”

And with loyalty we are also told:

‘There are others who may have a more elegant conducting style, but this does not draw the audience in to the same extent.’

This is echoed by another even more confident comment. “I have noticed more conductors are doing this lately and we know who they are copying!”

Some comments on rehearsals:

The concerts were always great - but at rehearsal he had a strange way of calling out the next piece in rehearsal by the name or the composer at the top of his own score. We often had to scabble to find it - when the title or composer was either not on the parts, or only part of the title, or a subtitle was on the parts. Not easy, but we always somehow managed.

Several people said that:

“You get to learn quite quickly that all the tempos in the performance somehow became faster than they were at rehearsals.”

“If there is a second encore you must remain extremely alert, it is quite likely to be something the orchestra has never rehearsed at all.”

One member mentioned to Gary that there was a need for a show to be produced at a certain Auckland Primary School - something that would involve everybody and extend the children. Gary said that a show he had written might do - *Cats of Ponsonby*. The suggestion was excellent and Gary went to the school to help work with the children to get the best out of them and the kids absolutely loved meeting a real live composer.

Our member reports that of all the shows produced at that school, *Cats of Ponsonby* would have been the most successful.

From the 'Cello section:

“It took many years to get Gary to allow the lady 'cellists to wear trousers as part of the concert uniform. But when we went to China a miracle occurred: the uniform was changed and we

got trousers which were skirts or skirts which were trousers or whatever those things are called.”

One of Gary’s more imaginative reprimands to the ’cello section was when he told us – “Cellos, you sound like elephants with gumboots on.”

“It took a while for us to teach Gary that ’cellists could not stand for applause then sit down and immediately start playing. You see, Gary, ’cellists need a few moments to find their hole in the floor, where we stick our spike.”

From the Percussion section:

Percussion can usually be heard, but Gary likes percussion to be definitely heard. He was a professional percussionist at one stage of his musical career. Perhaps this explains it.

Once, rather puzzlingly, he said to the cymbal player: “Please will you play the cymbals a bit louder.”

Another time during a rehearsal for the *Syncopated Clock*, he asked the player who was doing the ‘Tick Tock’ – “Can the woodpecker please stay in time and please, can you also play the ‘tick-tocks’ in tune.”

The percussion section reports that they kept moving each other around and playing different parts and he commented that from week to week he couldn’t remember who was supposed to be playing what. They now confess that this was deliberate - the percussionists kept moving just - so they say – “to keep the conductor on his toes....”

Any enquiry about what was the tempo got the answer, “You’ll find out during the concert.”

One percussionist admits that the players used to make up all sorts of extra bits and pieces that the composer hadn’t written. Gary was usually quite amiable about this and would sometimes say, “I like all that. Can you write all the new bits in your parts so I can add it to my score!”

In fact he sometimes made deliberate alterations to the score himself and explained that, “This Composer has been dead quite a while, so copyright does not apply. I like it done this slightly different way, so that’s how we’ll do it.”

Some compliments:

Sometimes Gary would say, “Thanks for a great concert. Now what are you doing next weekend - I need a Percussion Section for a gig.” This was inevitably way out of Auckland and usually involved accordions. We had some great adventures doing other concerts.

A player reports that new works, which Gary had composed, were meticulously rehearsed to see what they sounded like, with co-operative checking to spot any possible errors and smooth everything out until Gary is happy with it.... before doing the final print-out.

Sometimes an organization providing orchestral parts for an arrangement would supply the wrong ones. The next week, without any fuss, Gary would turn up with all the parts re-written correctly off his own computer and all spot on.

Someone recalls with pleasure that phoning Gary finds him always pleased to talk and values what you have to say. If he’s not there, even the answer phone message sounds welcoming as well!

Final comments on rehearsals:

We might have had a really crappy night at rehearsal but he would always make sure that the evening ended with a smile - because Gary believes music is to be enjoyed always. “But, just make sure that you don’t make the same mistakes next week.”

I remember in the late 90’s all ASO members were given a piece of paper with reasons on it as to why we would be excused for not being able to attend a rehearsal. It boiled down to there being only one real reason we could miss a rehearsal and that was if we were dead.

I once heard Gary on National Radio and the interviewer dared to say that she had heard that Gary was somewhat dictatorial and bossy in the rehearsal situation. Without a second’s pause, Gary replied, “Yes that’s right, and I make no apology for that.” It

seemed to me that this was actually a one-sentence explanation of the reason why the ASO's performances were of such a consistently high standard. You can't have a milksop conductor.

Some Garyisms:

Bigger means 'louder'.

Banjoes means string 'pizzicato'.

The word 'hole' actually means 'a rest'.

The expression 'stab chord' means everybody bang something as loud as possible on the last note.



Acknowledgements

I retired from the orchestra in December 2010 after thirty-five years at the helm. I thought that this had to be an entry for the Guinness Book of Records but actually I believe the current world record is 71 years. Now I find that hard to believe. On handing over the reigns to a younger maestro Peter Thomas, I felt that I was leaving the orchestra in very capable hands.

The orchestra appointed me Music Director Emeritus - acknowledging the 'intellectual knowledge and experience that I had accumulated.' Thank you.

I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank all those wonderful people who have helped, encouraged and bullied me, typed the script from my scribbled handwritten notes, proof read pages and pages, deleted hundreds of comas, listened to me burble on and on but still supported me with this story. I have enjoyed taking this trip down memory lane and sharing it with you.

Thank you.

“Good night and God Bless”

“Music should be fun. If you are not enjoying it then don't do it.”

Gary Daverne 2012

www.garydaverne.gen.nz



Did Gary actually say any of these collected sayings by conductors, during his years on the podium?

“I try not to look, because then I see.”

“Terrible rhythmic training. Why don’t you kill all your teachers and get your money back?”

“Play slow enough to be exact.”

“It’s eleganza — you sound like Woolworth’s.”

“Under no circumstances should anyone look at me here.”

“For that, they have milking machines.”

“If you won’t watch, I won’t listen.”

“I’ll try to spit equally in both directions so everyone will know where we are.”

“Play in a kind of Friday-matinee style.”

“Look artistic when you play that.”

“It’s very important to play your phrase the way it is.”

“Too loud ’cellos. And don’t throb there.”

“Try and simulate non-sight-reading.”

“The horn is still unwinding his entrails there.”

“Please don’t use the depth-charge pizzicato.”

“I know you’re all very well brought up, but don’t show it.”

“You sound like your fingers are doing the walking through the Yellow Pages.”

“Play short, especially if you don’t know where you are.”

“Violins don’t play like such pigs.”

“Better to be slow than quick.”

“It says accelerando. It’s not like falling downstairs.”

“Play that for your dogs and cats. When they stop howling, you’ve got it right.”

“It doesn’t need to be good, it just needs to be loud.”

“You should play a soft forte.”

“It sounds like you’re being goosed there, which isn’t the idea of a real orgy.”

“If that happens, don’t laugh.”

“We’re starting at bar three. Even those of you with all your fingers cut off can find it.”

“Play as if you were accompanying John Denver.”

“There is a lot of fishing for notes. I wish you would catch them.”

“Play as if you were musicians.”
“Look busy at the beginning.”
“It sounds like an Italian Strawberry Festival.”
“Try not to sound like Segovia.”
“Play faster. It’s getting late.”
“If you can’t play the notes, play the accents.”
“It sounds like killer bees on the loose.”
“The downbeat has to be up.”
“You all sound like a local Food Hall. I’ll have a strawberry soda.”
“Imagine that you know what I’m going to do.”
“It must be very soft. Play as if you’re lost.”
“It’s sort of yo-ho-ho, a little bit.”
“Violas, let your true piggish sides come out.”
“The piece is all based on harmony, so we have to hit the right notes.”
“Horns, imagine that you’ve had a really ugly breakfast and it’s about to come up.”
“Triangle, not so much in the loud section. Don’t join in on the fun.”
“My God, it’s a brook, not the ocean. I’m getting seasick.”
“Strings, I know what you’re thinking: ‘With all this racket going on, why am I playing?’ Well, there’s no time for existential questions right now.”
“Above all, don’t look worried.”
“It’s a little bit note-sniffing right now.”
“It sounds as if you’re all doing your income taxes.”
“Listen to the tune, and then accompany it in a non-disgraceful fashion.”
“You sound as if you hate music.”
“Look like you’re playing long after you’ve given up.”
“I may do something artistic there, which means I’m going to drag.”
“Violins, don’t try to play the accents, just try to get through the part without dropping your bows.”
“Imagine you’re getting enough money for what you do.”
“It sounds like everybody has already committed suicide.”
“Definitely third-world.”
“Strings, vibrate; you sound like storm troopers.”

“Your tone sounds like the weather outside.”
“It’s half-good.”
“Win the war with violas.”
“Trumpets, you’re honorary violas.”
“Not so bright. It sounds like ‘Orpheus in His Underwear’”
“Don’t make those chicken sounds before the beat.”
“Don’t hop! Chickens!”
“I’ll try not to make the really distracting twitch before your
“B double-flat.”
“Sounds like something you read in the Enquirer.”
“Don’t follow the pizzicatos. They’re just going ploop - cowpies.”
“Let’s see if you can pizzicato together in a non-banjo way.”
“It’s very hard to raise money for something that sounds like that.”
“It’s a place you can fake, but fake softer.”
“When I make the really big twitch, then play.”
“Make a lot of sound, an ugly, loud sound. Hostile.”
“Let’s pretend we played that right and go to letter A.”
“It sounds like a singer being drowned.”
“Play it as if you had good rhythm instead of what you have.”
“It’s not going to be a nice tempo, whatever it is.”
“It’s no use telling the violas, they won’t do it anyway.”
“That’s a laser sound, a killer trill.”
“This must be much more agitated. Think of someone you hate.”
“Think of your mother.”
“That was a drive-by viola solo.”
“Don’t be so sensitive.”
“Try and get the non-torpedo-boat sound.”
“The place where you will be shot if you come in early is the bar
before 26.”
“Don’t express your hatred for your parents there.”
“You’d kill your students for doing that, so don’t do it yourself.”
“The downbeat’s the downbeat.”
“Imagine you have tone.”
“I’m not doing much at the beginning of the measure, but I’m
going to beat it and get very excited.”
“You sound like Palestinians throwing rocks.”
“Try vibrato in case you don’t make the D-sharp.”
“Now forget all the nasty things I said and play naturally.”

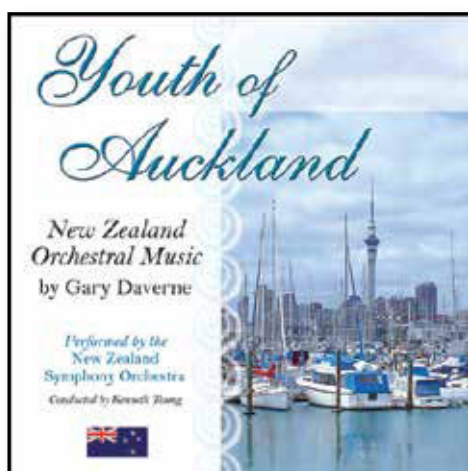
“Pretend you took the parts home and practised them.”
“I’m going to be very flexible and that means you won’t have a clue as to what’s going to happen.”
“Think of a nice sound, and then imitate your thought. If you can’t think of a nice sound, ask your neighbour.”
“Why did you take up the violin if you don’t want to play it?”
“If you get desperate I’ll even help you there.”
“You’re all wondering what speed it’s going to go. Well, so am I.”
“Sound like New Year’s Eve.” (To a saxophonist)
“Play like you’ve had expensive lessons.”
“I will fire the next one I see using vibrato on a pizz.” (To basses)
“Make it rounded. Not like a cow pie.”
“Funny how it sounds so different every time.”



GARY'S DISCOGRAPHY

All CDs and Music available Online or through
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www.oderecords.co.nz



Youth of Auckland - Cat. VISC102

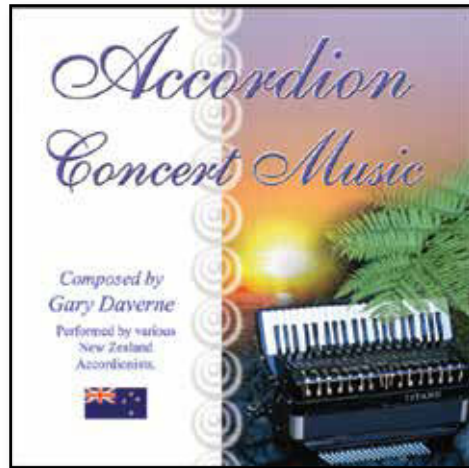
New Zealand Orchestral Music Composed by Gary Daverne

Performed by The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by Kenneth Young

Tracks:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | <i>Concert Overture - Youth Of Auckland</i> | 10:47 |
| 2. | <i>Rhapsody For Accordion and Orchestra</i> | 10:44 |
| | <i>Solo Accordion: Harley Jones</i> | |
| 3. | <i>Man that is Born of Woman</i> | 3:51 |
| 4. | <i>Day Of Aranga</i> | 3:04 |
| 5. | <i>I will Light A Fire</i> | 3:24 |
| 6. | <i>Rondo for Trombone and Orchestra</i> | 8:22 |
| | <i>Solo Trombone: Marc Taddei</i> | |
| 7. | <i>Concert Overture - Highbury Grove</i> | 12:25 |
| 8. | <i>Ka Puke Maeroero</i> | 13:40 |



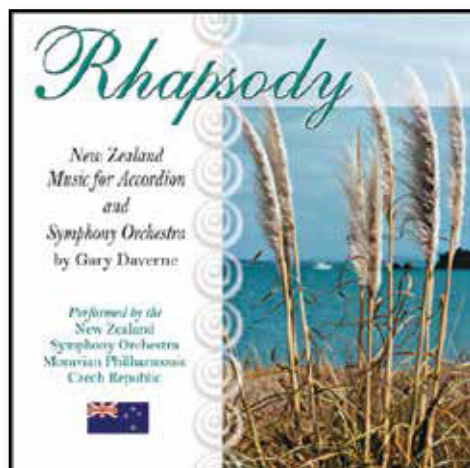
Accordion Concert Music - Cat. VISC101

Composed by Gary Daverne

Performed by Various Artists

Tracks:

1.	<i>A Pocket Overture</i>	4.09
2.	<i>Caprice</i>	8.17
3.	<i>Novelette</i>	3.56
4.	<i>Sonatina in C</i>	5.30
5.	<i>Arabesque</i>	4.42
6.	<i>Introduction and Toccata</i>	5.43
7.	<i>Waltz for Stephanie</i>	2.14
8.	<i>Scherzando</i>	3.37
9.	<i>Sonatina in G</i>	5.50
10.	<i>Theme and Variations</i>	6.23
11.	<i>Valse Musette</i>	3.36
12.	<i>A Jazz Burlesque</i>	3.01
13.	<i>Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra</i>	10.27
14.	<i>Auckland March</i>	4.26
15.	<i>Eventi</i>	2.59
16.	<i>Auckland City of Sails</i>	3.09



Rhapsody - Cat. VISC104

New Zealand Music for Accordion and Symphony Orchestra

Composed by Gary Daverne

Performed by The Moravian Philharmonic - Czech Republic

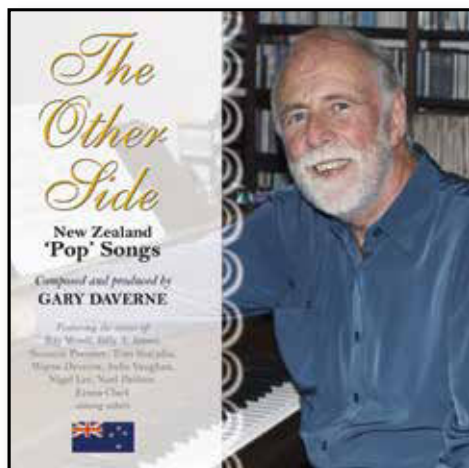
The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Various Solo Artists

Tracks:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | <i>A Musical Party</i> | 7.26 |
| | Mary Tokarski - Moravian Philharmonic | |
| | Conductor: Petr Sumnik | |
| 2. | <i>Concert Waltz</i> | 6.20 |
| | Bernadette Conlon - Moravian Philharmonic | |
| | Conductor: Petr Pololanik | |
| 3. | <i>Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra</i> | 11.32 |
| | Mary Tokarski - Moravian Philharmonic | |
| | Conductor: Gary Daverne | |
| | (Recorded live in concert - Olomouc,
Czech Republic. 13.10.05) | |

4.	<i>Gem of the Kaipara</i>	9.04
	Kevin Friedrich - Moravian Philharmonic	
	Conductor: Petr Pololanik	
	<i>Three Songs Without Words</i>	
	Mary Tokarski - New Zealand Symphony	
	Conductor: Kenneth Young	
5.	<i>Fireside Fantasies</i>	4.05
6.	<i>The Awakening</i>	3.04
7.	<i>The Journey</i>	
8.	<i>Waltz for Stephanie</i>	2.12
Bonus Tracks		
	<i>Shopping Centre Suite</i>	
	Mary Tokarski	
9.	<i>Come Shopping</i>	1.19
10.	<i>In the Bookstore</i>	2.35
11.	<i>Supermarket</i>	0.54
12.	<i>Coffee Shop</i>	2.13
13.	<i>Play Station</i>	1.01



The Other Side - Cat. VISC105

New Zealand 'Pop' songs Composed and produced by Gary Daverne

(Co-writers names are in brackets)

Tracks:

1. *Adventure on the Other Side* - Studio Orchestra
2. *1990 Commonwealth Games Song (Phil Mark)* - Ray Woolf and Friends
3. *There's Nothing Better Than Rock 'n Roll (John Reynolds)* - Tom Sharplin
4. *Auckland City - Feel the Beat (Phil Mark)* - Nigel Lee
5. *Let's Sing a Country Song (John Reynolds)* - Jodi Vaughan
6. *Let's Make This World a Better Place (P. Stewart)* - Billy T. James
7. *Pleased to be Me (Dianna Ward)* – Dominic Leauga - Dionne Smith – Kirstie O'Sullivan
8. *Come on South - To Southland (Sam Gardiner)* - Suzanne Prentice
9. *The New Zealand Song (Dorothy Tomlinson)* - Wayne Daverne
with children from Konini Primary School

10. *Homecoming (Fri Knight)* - Patricia Walton with the Air NZ Accordion Orchestra
11. *Don't Get Too Close (T. Schaumkel)* - Noel Parlane
12. *Land of Maui (Fri Knight)* - Patricia Walton with the Air NZ Accordion Orchestra
13. *No-one Plays Guitar Like Mr Atkins Can (Mike Edgar)* - Gary Daverne
14. *Everything's Fine* - Maori Hi Marks

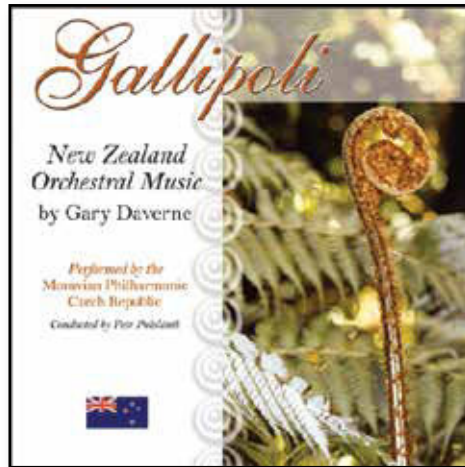
From the Musicals

'Robyn Hood - Outlaw Princess' - Rock Musical (John Reynolds)

15. *Feel the Fire* - Erna Clark
16. *Contrasts* - Linda Poulton
17. *Changes* - Barbara Davidson
'Hi Ya Messiah' - Rock Musical (Ed Justin)
18. *Down With Up* - Wayne Daverne with original cast
19. *Looking For A Bride* - Wayne Daverne
20. *Were Going to Be Free* – Maquini Minahera with original cast
21. *Title Song - Hi Ya Messiah* - Original Cast
'The Brothers Three' - Children's Musical (J. Grierson, R. Cranswick)
22. *Money, Money, Money* - Aotea Art Ed Choir
23. *Five Years* - Jane Horder with Aotea Art Ed Choir

The Instrumentals

24. *Sophia* - Sasha Witten-Hannah (*guitar*)
25. *Cookie* - Deryn Trainer (*piano*)
26. *Jandals* - Joe 'Fingers' Webster
27. *Eventi* - Maurice Jones (*Accordion*)
28. *Ring Ting A Ding (Rex Bowmast)* - The Silhouettes with the Glendelles
29. *The Wobbly* - Gray Bartlett Combo
30. *Shark* - Gray Bartlett Combo



Gallipoli - Cat. VISC103

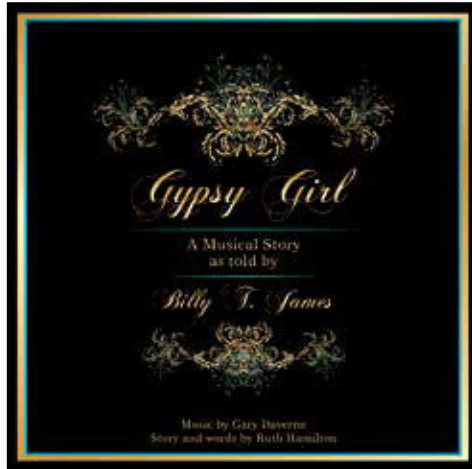
New Zealand Orchestral Music by Gary Daverne

Performed by The Moravian Philharmonic - Czech Republic

Conducted by Petr Pololanik

Tracks:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | <i>Fanfare and Procession</i> | 2:38 |
| 2. | <i>Portrait of Ponsonby</i> | 9:03 |
| 3. | <i>Concert Overture - For the Academy</i> | 8:06 |
| 4. | <i>Gallipoli - Rhapsody for Trumpet and Orchestra</i> | |
| | <i>Solo Trumpet: Marek Bubenicek</i> | 15:43 |
| 5. | <i>Tribal Ritual</i> | 9:09 |
| 6. | <i>Ghosts of Alberton</i> | 8:30 |
| 7. | <i>A Pocket Overture</i> | 4:14 |
| 8. | <i>Gem of the Kaipara</i> | |
| | <i>Solo Accordion: Kevin Friedrich</i> | 9:04 |
| 9. | <i>A Jazz Burlesque</i> | 3:00 |



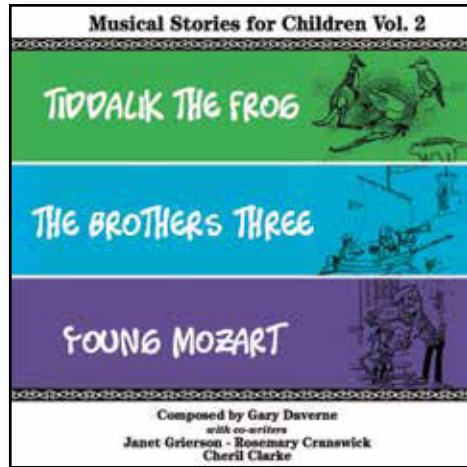
Gypsy Girl - A Musical Tale - Cat. VISC109

Music by Gary Daverne. Words by Ruth Hamilton

Storyteller: Billy T. James with the singing voices of sisters, Beth, Harriett and Laura Draper, assisted by the voices from younger years from Glenfield Intermediate School, North Shore, Auckland.

Musical Numbers

1. *Gypsy Girl*
2. *Bully Rap No.1*
3. *You're Dirty*
4. *All Alone*
5. *The Funeral*
6. *Gypsy Dance*
7. *What to do?*
8. *Bully Rap No.2*
9. *Why can't you be Friends?*
10. *Come dance*
11. *Don't Believe Them*



New Zealand Musical Stories for Children Vol. 2 - Cat. VISC111

**Tiddalik the Frog*

Composed and produced by Gary Daverne

Words by Cheril Clarke

Narrated by Gary Daverne with the singing voices of: Shalom Pinto - Andrea Leigh - Laura Draper - Lygia Verhoven - John Stephen Daverne

1. *Once Long Ago in Dreamtime*
2. *And the Rivers Ran Dry,*
3. *Tell Us What to Do Mr Wombat*
4. *Laughing Song*
5. *Dreamtime*

****The Brothers Three***

Composed and produced by Gary Daverne

With co-writers: Janet Grierson and Rosemary Cranswick

Narrated by David Weatherly with the Auckland Aotea Art Ed Choir

1. *Work Chant and Storyteller*
2. *If we had lots of money*
3. *Brothers' Song*
4. *Five Years - The Mothers Song*
5. *Fanfare (Instrumental) - Messenger*
6. *Find the Princess*
7. *If we had lots of money (Reprise)*

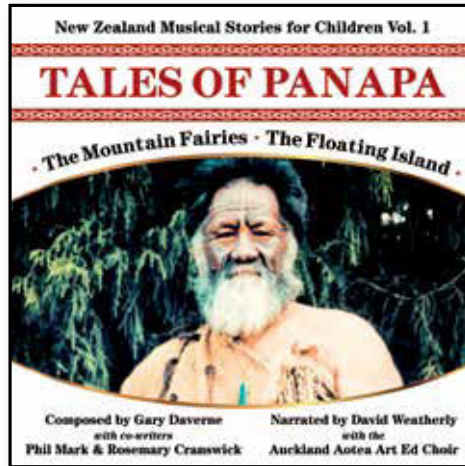
****Young Mozart***

Composed and produced by Gary Daverne

With co-writers: Janet Grierson and Rosemary Cranswick

Narrated by Gary Daverne with the singing voices of: Philippa Delany - Beth Draper – Jordan Nicholson - Sophie Nielsen - Deborah Riley – Julia Thomson

1. *Our Teacher*
2. *Young Mozart*
3. *Another Time Another Place*
4. *High Society Gavotte*
5. *We Wonder What' the Problem is with Mozart*
6. *Minuet in F*
7. *Finale*



New Zealand Musical Stories for Children Vol. 1 - Cat. VISC110

Composed and produced by Gary Daverne
 With co-writers Phil Mark and Rosemary Cranswick
 Narrated by David Weatherly with the Auckland Aotea Art Ed Choir

Tales of Panapa

****The Mountain Fairies***

1. *Told through the Mists of Time*
2. *Incantation*
3. *Angry Fairies' Song*
4. *Panapa Was Gone*
4. *Villagers' Song*
5. *Fairy Chief Rap 1*
6. *Ancestors' Song*
7. *Panama's Speech*
8. *Fairy Rap 3*
9. *Finale*

****Floating Island***

1. *A Strange Dream*
2. *Please Can You Help Me*
3. *The Dream Is True*
4. *Ancient Spirits Song*
5. *Ancient Spirits' Rap*
6. *Pushing Shoving*
7. *Tell Us What Is There*
8. *Dreams Are Not Always What They Seem*



Jingles - Cat. VISC106

117 New Zealand Radio & TV Advertising Music Soundtracks
Composed and produced by Gary Daverne

(Gary stopped counting after he had written in excess of 500 jingles)



