

## **Waifs & Strays – some musical orphans and ragamuffins of classical music**

**Resonance Ensemble** and conductor **Tony Ryan** delve into some less well-known music by **Rossini** and **Prokofiev**, as well as a hidden gem from an almost completely unknown composer.

**Rossini's** comic opera *Il Signor Bruschino* is rarely heard these days although its sparkling overture is one of the composer's most delightful – full of spirit and some novel special effects.

Another forgotten waif is the composer and horn player Jan Václav Stich who translated his name to **Giovanni Punto** when he ran away from home at the age of 20 and went to Italy. Horn soloist for this concert, **Alex Morton**, suggested the inclusion of **Punto's Horn Concerto No. 5** in this programme. It's proved to be quite a find and demonstrates what an exceptional virtuoso this composer must have been.

Also on the programme is one of Sergei **Prokofiev's** least played works – his *Overture on Hebrew Themes*, another stray masterpiece that deserves to be heard more often because of its catchy melodies and colourful orchestration. But, perhaps even more of a waif and a stray is the same composer's *Symphony No. 7*, which was completed in 1952, just a year before **Prokofiev** died.

Resonance Ensemble has previously played **Prokofiev's** very popular *Symphony No. 1* – the *Classical Symphony* and, although his *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies* are also frequently played and recorded, the less often heard *Seventh* is perhaps the composer's most gorgeously tuneful and harmonically adventurous. Less dramatic and aggressive than some of **Prokofiev's** earlier symphonies, the *Seventh* is a heart-felt and lyrical masterpiece that will remind listeners of his uplifting and moving *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music.

### **French Horn soloist: Alex Morton**

Alex grew up in Christchurch as a nerdy musical kid, taking part in every performance opportunity he could. While he originally set his sights on learning the trombone, his short eight-year-old arms meant that a French horn was fortuitously placed in them instead.

In 2009, Alex moved to Wellington to complete his Bachelor of Music before continuing his studies at the Australian National Academy of Music. During his four years at ANAM he really began to cut his teeth professionally in the wonderfully vibrant music scene that Melbourne had to offer, holding contracts with both the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and appearing as Guest Principal Horn with Orchestra Victoria.

As a chamber musician, Alex pursues his love of the medium as a member of the internationally-acclaimed Morton Trio, with his wife and violinist, Arna Morton, and pianist, Liam Wooding.

In 2020, Alex and Arna moved back to Christchurch where Alex's career has evolved into a richly fulfilling one. While still performing regularly as one of New Zealand's most desirable freelance musicians, Alex has also delved headfirst into the fulfilling world of music and performance education. See more at: <https://www.mortonmusic.online/>

**When: 3pm, Sunday 6 April**

**Venue: The Piano (156 Armagh Street, Christchurch)**

Book at Humanitix: <https://events.humanitix.com/resonance-ensemble-waifs-and-strays>

See more information at <https://www.resonance.net.nz/>