



**ORCHESTRA.
WELLINGTON**

**Shall
We
Dance?**

Season 2027



Nau mai, haere mai, welcome to Orchestra Wellington's 2027 season, Shall We Dance?

In our 79th year, we celebrate the community that makes this orchestra possible: our players, the artists joining us from across Aotearoa and beyond, and the audiences, partners and donors who sustain it all. This season traces the story of dance, beginning in the beautifully restored Te Whare Whakarauika, Wellington Town Hall – a fitting way to bring this beloved building, and Wellington, back to life together.

This is your orchestra – bold, vibrant, and rooted in the people and spirit of Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Our players are world-class artists whose passion goes beyond the stage, sharing skills and energy in schools, community halls and neighbourhoods across our region. Through initiatives like Music to Schools, our partnership with Arohanui Strings+, and concerts such as Symphony in the Hutt and Baby Pops, music is lived, shared, and passed on to the next generation.

None of this is possible without our community. We're deeply grateful for the support of Wellington City Council, Creative NZ, our funders and partners, and especially our donors: our Chair Donors, who walk alongside the players; Music Directors Club; and those who have entrusted their legacy to the Orchestra Wellington Foundation. Your generosity keeps ticket prices low, carries music into every corner of our region, and ensures this orchestra belongs to everyone.

Above all, our work is made meaningful through you, our audiences. Your presence, enthusiasm and belief in what we do transform every performance into something greater than the sum of its parts. Come and be part of it – celebrate the talent, generosity, collaboration and shared experience that make Orchestra Wellington unlike any other. Ngā mihi nui,

Beckie Lockhart

Chief Executive, Orchestra Wellington

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Marc Taddei

Music Director

Celebrated for his “magnificent contribution as Music Director” by *The Press*, lauded as “a real interpreter of boldly romantic inclinations” by the *Dominion Post* and singled out for his “intensity, commitment and attention to detail”, conductor Marc Taddei is the Music Director of Orchestra Wellington, and the Vallejo Symphony Orchestra in the United States.

During his tenure critics have repeatedly remarked on his extraordinary connection with audiences and zest for continually creating engaging, erudite and innovative programmes, while *The Press* praised Marc, “whose energy, exuberance, drive and vision proved beyond all doubt that music is an essential feature of daily life in a 21st-century city.”

Marc’s impressive discography includes over thirty recordings on the Sony, BMG, Koch, Columbia, ABC Classics, Trust, ASV, Universal, Rattle, Atoll, Concordance, and Kiwi Pacific labels. His latest recording with Orchestra Wellington, *Leviathan*, is a double LP/CD dedicated to the music of John Psathas and is the largest budget classical release in New Zealand history.

His work in recording, television, and film music has been awarded the Pris de Bale (Switzerland), Vodafone Classical Recording of the Year, Luxembourg’s *Pizzicato* Magazine Supersonic Award and Classic FM (UK) recording of the month.

Read more about Marc on our website.



Amalia Hall

Concertmaster

Noted by *The Strad* for her “blazing insight and dazzling virtuosity”, New Zealand violinist Amalia Hall is the Concertmaster of Orchestra Wellington, a member of NZTrio, and regularly performs internationally as a soloist.

Amalia’s international career blossomed from winning the top prize at five international competitions. She is also a major prize winner at numerous others, including the Joseph Joachim International Competition and International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. As a teenager she won all of the major national music awards in New Zealand before completing studies at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music with Pamela Frank and Joseph Silverstein.

Since making her solo debut aged 9 with the Auckland Philharmonia, Amalia’s solo appearances have included I Virtuosi Italiani, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, United Strings of Europe, NDR Radiophilharmonie, National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan, Mexico State Symphony Orchestra, Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, Filarmónica de Querétaro and Filarmónica de Acapulco.

Performances have taken Amalia throughout Europe, Asia, USA, South Africa, Australia, Mexico, Argentina, Uzbekistan, Cuba, Honduras, Lebanon and NZ. She has performed as Guest Concertmaster for l’Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the Macao Orchestra, and recorded for Atoll, BIS, Bridge and Rattle Records.

Read more about Amalia on our website.



Ewan Clark Composer-in-Residence

Ewan Clark is a Wellington-based composer, orchestrator, music lecturer and conductor. His music encompasses concert works, orchestration, and music for screen, drawing on a career that has brought him into close contact with orchestras, performers, and diverse musical styles. His *Triple Concerto, Karehana*, brings these strands of his musical practice together in a new large-scale concert work.

Clark's relationship with orchestral music began early: alongside composing, he has played trombone in orchestras since his school days. His *Landfall* (1997), written while still at school for orchestra and uilleann pipes, was premiered by Dunedin Sinfonia (now Dunedin Symphony Orchestra) and won the New Zealand Young Composers Award.

His *Gethsemane* (2000) for string orchestra and four solo violins has since been performed by the Wellington Youth Orchestra, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and, most recently, Orchestra Wellington as part of its *Psathas Sessions*.

Clark has worked extensively in screen music, orchestration, and arranging. He orchestrated Tim Prebble's APRA Award-winning score for *One Thousand Ropes* (2017) and has arranged for Tiki Taane, Ria Hall, and Alien Weaponry in performances with the CSO, APO, and NZSO. He has also orchestrated three film scores for Alex Mandel, including *The Inventor* (2023), starring Daisy Ridley and Stephen Fry. Clark lectures at the New Zealand School of Music in orchestration, film scoring, and music theory. His recent work includes the score for *The Dog Show*, recorded with the NZSO and released in New Zealand cinemas in November 2026.



John Psathas

Patron

New Zealand–Greek composer Ioannis (John) Psathas has a history of large-scale, collaborative projects – such as writing for the ceremonies of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, and collaborating with iconic artists such as Salman Rushdie, Michael Brecker, Joshua Redman, Serj Tankian, Oum, and many others.

Following three decades of creating works for traditional ensembles (particularly in the world of percussion) the nature of John’s work has now shifted into a space of urgent social commentary, combining a range of live performance formats and technologies. Having collaborated in electronica, pop, classical, jazz, and multi-ethnic projects, he is now weaving these strands into new work that integrates virtuosic live performance with video, text, and cinematic soundscapes.

Appointing John Psathas as Patron reflects Orchestra Wellington’s core belief that everything begins with the composer and their work, but it’s ultimately about forging deeper connections with our audience. John’s extraordinary ability to engage listeners – both through his own music and his passionate advocacy for New Zealand composers – makes him a perfect fit for this role. We are humbled by our association with him.

Read more about John on our website and be sure to check out John’s website at www.jpsathas.com.



Shall We Dance?

Season 2027

It is one of the great paradoxes of Western classical music that audiences now encounter it almost exclusively in silence and stillness.

We enter a concert hall, take our seats, and for the next two hours scarcely move, applauding only at prescribed moments.

But for much of its history, this image would have been unrecognisable.

Music was something people moved to for centuries before it was something they merely listened to. Long before the harmonic language we recognise as the Common Practice had fully evolved, music existed as an accompaniment to ritual, procession, courtship, celebration, and communal dancing. Dance was not simply one of music's many functions – it was a force that shaped the very language through which Western art music eventually learned to think.

That may sound like an extravagant claim. We readily acknowledge that composers throughout history borrowed dances – Mozart's minuets, Chopin's mazurkas, Strauss's waltzes, Bartók's folk dances. But these familiar examples risk obscuring a deeper truth: dance did not merely provide composers with attractive rhythms or colourful national styles; it influenced phrase structure, repetition, metre, harmonic rhythm, cadence and, ultimately, musical architecture itself. More profoundly, it taught listeners how to hear.

Every conductor knows the sensation of feeling an audience lean, almost imperceptibly, towards an approaching cadence, sensing the destination long before they could explain the mechanics. I've experienced this more times than I can count from the podium – several hundred strangers, each carrying their own private evening into the room, responding almost as one body.

How did audiences learn to anticipate musical arrival so naturally? Perhaps the answer isn't in the concert hall at all. Perhaps it began on the dance floor. To successfully accompany dance, music must have qualities that purely contemplative music does not require.

Dancers need to know when phrases start and end. Cadences cannot appear arbitrarily, but must arrive, balanced and well-proportioned, to signal a gesture's completion. The dancer's response moves between predictability and surprise: precisely what later became a defining characteristic of Western tonal music. The body, one might say, taught the ear.

Our 2027 Orchestra Wellington season, **Shall We Dance?**, explores this relationship across six subscription programmes, including our gala re-opening of the Wellington Town Hall. These concerts trace the ways dance has continually reinvented itself across eight centuries: sacred ritual, court spectacle, social entertainment, folk tradition, theatrical drama, jazz – and, finally, as something so deeply embedded within musical language that the orchestra itself learned to dance without anyone needing to leave their chair.

The earliest surviving evidence that lets us glimpse the interaction between dance and composed music belongs to medieval Europe. Much of what survives from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries comes from the repertory of the troubadours of southern France and the trouvères of the north, whose narrative forms reveal a fascinating relationship between poetry, music, and dance.

The trouvère Conon de Béthune (c.1150–1220) wrote, “I will make a song that is light upon the ear, for it matters to me that all may learn it and willingly sing it”, an artistic ideal that feels strikingly modern. Before music can aspire to complexity, it must first be memorable. A melody that can’t survive the walk home is unlikely to survive eight centuries.

The trouvères cultivated structures built on repetition. Refrains frequently escaped the songs for which they’d been written, acquiring independent lives as recognisable musical tags – what we’d now happily call hooks. One revealing example is the pastourelle by Moniot d’Arras (d.1239), *L’Autrier en mai* (“The Other Day in May”), describing music performed with fiddle accompaniment while dancing in the open air. Its balanced alternation of long and short poetic phrases hints at the binary organisation that would later become fundamental to European dance forms.

What fascinates me more than what was written down, though, is what wasn’t. Sacred

chant was copied with extraordinary care because the Church depended upon faithful transmission. Dance, by contrast, remained one of the slowest musical traditions to surrender itself to notation. Western music developed along two parallel paths: one preserved in manuscripts, the other in memory. A written tradition values precision and fidelity to a text; an embodied tradition encourages flexibility and improvisation. Dance became a fertile laboratory for musical invention, constantly evolving as performers responded to changing tastes and practical necessity. One tradition preserved music. The other kept it alive.

As medieval society urbanised through the thirteenth century, secular music moved beyond aristocratic courts into expanding towns, where professional minstrels began elaborating melodies and improvising embellishments. The earliest surviving collections devoted principally to instrumental dance date largely from the fifteenth century, especially the elegant basse danse cultivated in Burgundy, France and Italy. Unlike chant, dance demanded recognisable lengths, recurring proportions, and clear cadences.

The body began teaching the ear how music should unfold; the ear, in turn, taught composers to organise musical thought.

That unwritten knowledge found one of its most remarkable chroniclers in the Spanish theorist, composer, and viol player Diego Ortiz, who spent most of his career at the viceregal court in Naples. His *Tratado de glosas* (1553), among the earliest books devoted to instrumental performance, documents a practice passed down through memory: improvising elaborate counterpoint over chansons, sacred music and, significantly, dances.

Ortiz was doing more than explaining how to play; he was beginning to explain how music works. Repeated harmonic patterns – grounds such as the passamezzo and romanesca – became structures over which musicians could invent endlessly varied melodic lines. Harmony emerged as an organising principle rather than the by-product of independent voices, marking one of the great revolutions in Western listening: audiences began hearing not only individual musical events, but relationships unfolding through time. Ortiz did not invent these practices; he recognised and preserved what generations of dance musicians had discovered. From these foundations grew more sophisticated tonal thinking and, eventually, the harmonic language of the Common Practice. Dance had become syntax.

If Ortiz represents the moment dance begins shaping musical language, seventeenth-century France represents the moment that language acquires extraordinary elegance. No European court understood dance more than Versailles, where Louis XIV recognised that choreography was never merely entertainment – it expressed hierarchy, discipline and political order.

**Music didn't
just accompany
spectacle; it
became one of its
principal languages.**

No composer contributed more to this world than Jean-Baptiste Lully. He created the musical language of Versailles, fusing music, choreography, and theatre into a unified vision whose influence spread throughout Europe. Dance had become art.

The culmination of this tradition arrived with Jean-Philippe Rameau – and there could hardly be a more fitting composer through whom to encounter dance at its most refined.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, dance was so absorbed into Western musical language that composers no longer needed to write dances to think like dancers. The minuet became an expected movement in symphonies and string quartets, not because audiences wished to dance, but because centuries of dance had shaped expectations of proportion, symmetry, and balance. Haydn transformed German dances, minuets, and ländler into sophisticated musical arguments. Though dance had become abstract, its language remained.

Our first programme, **Celebration**, is the gala re-opening of the Wellington Town Hall. It is an honour to participate, and I can think of no better way to bring this building back to life than through these works.

Debussy's *Ibéria* imagines Spain through memory rather than geography. Processions drift across distant streets, guitars shimmer through the orchestral texture, rhythms appear accidentally before dissolving into colour and light. This is dance remembered rather than observed.

Respighi's *Church Windows* reminds us that movement isn't confined to the ballroom. Long before dance became social entertainment, ritual gave physical expression to communal belief; beneath its monumental orchestral frescoes one senses processions, ceremony, and collective movement unfolding through musical time. This work will also give the newly renovated organ of the Town Hall a suitable workout!

As will the organ part in the most elemental work on the programme – Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*! Unlike the great Latin settings of Bach, Mozart, and Verdi, Janáček deliberately chose Old Church Slavonic, rooting the work in the language and traditions of his own people. This is sacred music of astonishing physicality, and even at its most ecstatic one senses communal ritual rather than theatrical display.

Symphonic Dances brings movement to the forefront and asks a darker question: can dance express not simply joy, but conflict? Roberto Sierra's *Fandangos* celebrates one of Spain's oldest dance traditions through contemporary orchestral colour, while Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* show choreography elevated into pure symphonic argument. Against this vibrant first half stands Shostakovich's first violin concerto, an apparent outsider that in fact belongs entirely: his dances rarely smile without irony, rhythmic energy becomes psychological tension, and motion itself becomes resistance. Our concertmaster, Amalia Hall, will be soloist.

Our third programme, **Shall We Dance?**, which gives this season its title, explores the American reinvention of dance and celebrates a great moment when popular culture and concert music became inseparable. Gershwin refused to recognise distinctions between Broadway, jazz, and the concert hall; Bernstein dissolved the remaining barriers almost completely; Ellington demonstrated that jazz itself possessed symphonic breadth.

Celebrate a great moment when popular culture and concert music became inseparable.

Rhapsody in Blue remains one of the defining musical portraits of twentieth-century America, never apologising for its influences. The exhilarating final ballet from the movie *Shall We Dance?* reminds us that Gershwin understood something fundamental about theatre: dance doesn't accompany character, it reveals it.

Bernstein's *Fancy Free* extends the same idea – three sailors, one evening in New York, a ballet of such humanity that it would eventually give rise to *On the Town* and, ultimately, *West Side Story*, where dance no longer decorates the drama but becomes it. Ellington's *The River*, conceived as a ballet for Alvin Ailey, completes the programme, showing jazz moving effortlessly onto a symphonic scale.

Appalachian Spring opens with John Adams' *The Chairman Dances*, which imagines an episode that never actually occurs in his opera *Nixon in China*: Madame Mao steps down from a giant portrait and begins to dance. The orchestra pulses with the energy of minimalism (and more than a passing resemblance to the Stravinsky symphony that concludes the programme!), recalling foxtrot, jazz, and big band along the way.

I'm thrilled that Ewan Clark will be celebrated as Orchestra Wellington's Composer in Residence for the 2027 season. Ewan is a musician of unusual breadth – a composer, orchestrator, conductor and trombonist with an instinctive understanding of how an orchestra breathes and how music can carry a dramatic narrative.

I have championed his masterful *Gethsemane* for more than two decades, conducting it with orchestras throughout New Zealand. Its emotional directness, structural assurance and luminous writing for strings convinced me long ago that Ewan possessed a distinctive and important musical voice. Most recently, Orchestra Wellington Patron John Psathas featured the work in the *Psathas Sessions*, bringing renewed attention to a piece that deserves a permanent place in our orchestral repertoire.

Ewan's new Triple Concerto, *Karehana*, commissioned by NZTrio, brings three individual musical personalities into conversation with one another and with the orchestra. That makes it especially fitting for a season devoted to movement, gesture and exchange. Its world premiere promises to be one of the major events in New Zealand music during 2027.

Copland's masterpiece *Appalachian Spring* brings one of America's great celebrations of communal life, before Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* closes the programme. Stravinsky believed he was writing absolute music, with no stage or dancer in mind – yet Balanchine immediately recognised its choreographic possibilities and built one of his greatest ballets from it, while Adams creates an entire foxtrot out of one of its most appealing rhythmic cells!

Nowhere is the inheritance of dance more beautifully transformed than in French music at the turn of the twentieth century – and nowhere in this season more than in our fifth programme, **La Valse**, which traces an extraordinary lineage across almost two centuries of French imagination.

It opens with Rameau, where dance remains inseparable from theatre. Between him and Ravel stands one of the great masterpieces of French ballet, Paul Dukas' *La Péri*, occupying a fascinating threshold: inhabiting neither the ceremonial world of Versailles nor the psychological landscape of modernism, its rich orchestral palette foreshadows the refinement Debussy and Ravel would bring to full flower.

Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G major* follows naturally. Like Gershwin, whom he greatly admired, Ravel recognised jazz as one of the great rhythmic resources available to twentieth-century composers, and the concerto dances almost constantly – with wit, irony, and always extraordinary elegance.

Nowhere is the inheritance of dance more beautifully transformed than in French music at the turn of the twentieth century

Then comes *La Valse*, one of the most exceptional orchestral works ever written. Conceived initially as a tribute to Johann Strauss II and the glittering world of the Viennese ballroom, it gradually becomes something infinitely more unsettling: emerging from orchestral mist, waltz rhythms emerge, gather momentum, and finally spin beyond human control. Whether one hears an elegy for imperial Vienna, the collapse of a civilisation, or simply the irresistible momentum of the dance itself scarcely matters. Ravel transforms the dance into metaphor.

Our sixth and final programme, **Fanfares And Dances** returns to the source. Bartók's *Dance Suite*, written in 1923 for the fiftieth anniversary of the union of Buda and Pest, reconnects us with the folk traditions that continually renewed Western music whenever it risked detachment from ordinary experience.

Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*, sung by the outstanding New Zealand contralto Kristin Darragh, offer the season's most intimate moment. Kristin's richly-coloured voice, dramatic intelligence and exceptional sensitivity to text make her an ideal interpreter of these songs, whose movement has become internal: breath replaces gesture, inflection replaces choreography, and every phrase still unfolds through expectation, balance and release. They are a wonder.

Finally, Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, written for the Sokol gymnastics festival celebrating Czech civic identity, returns dance to the public square. Its fanfares announce not merely a concert but a community – processions, ceremony and collective celebration standing in for the ballroom – so the season that began in ritual also ends with it.

Looking back across these six programmes, and beginning with the gala that reopens the Wellington Town Hall, they read less like a list of concerts than a single musical argument. Dance first organised movement, then rhythm, then harmony, until it became so deeply woven into musical thought that composers no longer needed dancers to write dance music. Perhaps that is why audiences still lean instinctively towards a cadence – somewhere beneath every phrase, every climax, every silence, the body remembers lessons first learned through movement centuries ago.

I've spent much of my life standing in front of orchestras, and I still find that extraordinary. Perhaps the real question posed by this season is not whether we should dance. It's whether classical music ever stopped.

Marc Taddei

Music Director, Orchestra Wellington

Dance organised movement, then rhythm, then harmony, until it became so deeply woven into musical thought that composers no longer needed dancers to write dance music.

Perhaps that is why audiences still lean instinctively towards a cadence – somewhere beneath every phrase, every climax, every silence, the body remembers lessons first learned through movement centuries ago.

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A stylized illustration of a man in a black tuxedo with a textured pattern, playing a saxophone. He is shown from the waist up, angled towards the right, with his eyes closed in concentration. The background is a solid reddish-orange color with several dark, curved, brushstroke-like lines swirling around the man and the text. The overall style is graphic and artistic.

Celebration

Saturday 13 March 7.30pm
Wellington Town Hall

Symphonic Dances

Saturday 15 May, 7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre

Shall We Dance?

Saturday 17 July, 7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre

Appalachian Spring

Saturday 11 September, 7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre

La Valse

Saturday 23 October, 7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre

Fanfares and Dances

Saturday 27 November, 7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre



Celebration

Celebration

Claude Debussy

Iberia

Ottorino Respighi

Church Windows

(Vetrare di chiesa)

Leoš Janáček

Glagolitic Mass

Orpheus Choir Wellington

Brent Stewart,

Guest Conductor

Saturday 13 March

7.30pm

Te Whare Whakarauika

Wellington Town Hall

Our first concert folds our 2027 dance theme into a celebration of our beloved Town Hall's re-opening.

We invite you to experience its legendary acoustics which allow everything from pin-prick delicacy and diaphanous transparency to soul-shaking power.

Kicking off the season is *Iberia*. Immediately you'll hear how the Town Hall captures every nuance of Claude Debussy's orchestral textures evoking the moods and colours of Spain: the shimmer of guitars, alluring dance rhythms, joyful processions on distant streets.

Equally colourful is Respighi's *Church Windows*. Imagine light refracted through stained glass in these musical depictions of four dramatic Biblical themes. Again, one senses processions and ceremonial movement, and finally awe as we invoke the full impact of the Town Hall's acoustics with the reawakening of Wellington Town Hall's long-silent organ.

Then the Orpheus Choir Wellington joins us for Leoš Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, a stunning work requiring a double chorus as well as a large orchestra and soloists. The Town Hall's organ features again in a rhapsodic solo. Hearing this rarely performed masterpiece in the Town Hall will be unforgettable.

Janáček said that for his Mass, his cathedral was "the enormous grandeur of mountains beyond which stretched the open sky ... the scent of moist forests my incense."

Symphonic Dances



Symphonic Dances

Roberto Sierra

Fandangos

Leonard Bernstein

*Symphonic Dances
from West Side Story*

Dmitri Shostakovich

Violin Concerto No. 1

Amalia Hall, violin

Saturday 15 May

7.30pm

Michael Fowler Centre

In a concert devoted to the music of America, it would be a crime to neglect the Latin American part of that great continent, so we begin with Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra and his beguiling piece *Fandangos*. It's an exploration of the famous Andalusian courtship dance, filled with the clatter of castanets, string and trumpet flourishes, and flute arabesques. The melody will feel familiar yet fresh as splashes of contemporary soundscapes mingle with folk music.

There's more Puerto Rican magic in Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from Westside Story*, as he evokes New York's warring street gangs. In this Romeo and Juliet tale of star-crossed lovers, the Jets are pitted against the Puerto Rican Sharks. Their catchy Latino rhythms and flamboyant percussion-driven mambos and cha-chas confront the Sharks, whose tense and explosive fight scenes are underpinned by the brassy jazz and the industrial modernity of New York itself.

Then Orchestra Wellington's wonderful concertmaster Amalia Hall is our soloist for Dmitri Shostakovich's *Violin Concerto No. 1*. Written for Shostakovich's friend, the legendary violinist David Oistrakh, this superb concerto is a chance to showcase Amalia's virtuosity.

The work begins by reflecting the oppressive times in which it was written. So threatening was Stalin's hold over Shostakovich that when he completed the concerto, in 1948, he put it aside until 1955, two years after Stalin's death. But the gloomy opening mood soon breaks free with wild scherzos, a yearningly beautiful passacaglia and finally a frantic whirlwind of violin dexterity.

Shall We Dance?



Shall We Dance?

George Gershwin
Shall We Dance?
(*Hector's Ballet*)

Leonard Bernstein
Fancy Free

George Gershwin
Rhapsody in Blue
Somi Kim, piano

Duke Ellington
The River

Saturday 17 July
7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre

Approaching winter with jaunty steps, we'll hear Gershwin's light yet sophisticated music for a dance sequence, *Hector's Ballet*, from the Hollywood movie, *Shall We Dance?*. This comedy romance about an American ballet dancer posing as a Russian starred Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Fancy Free is the first of a series of wildly successful collaborations between the legendary choreographer Jerome Robbins and the young composer Leonard Bernstein. Four rimshots on the snare-drum introduce us to three sailors, in town on shore leave, where they are greeted by the rhythms and energy of Jazz Age New York.

Then in the company of NZTrio's beloved pianist, Somi Kim, we'll sashay through Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. From the unforgettable clarinet slide at the beginning, the *Rhapsody* bowls along, piano and orchestra trading themes that are sometimes strutting and brash, sometimes sweetly, bluesily nostalgic, and sometimes purely playful. Gershwin called it "... a musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness."

Such an American concert would not be complete without some Duke Ellington. Choreographer Alvin Ailey asked Ellington for a work that "... was to follow the course of a stream through various stages: through a meander, a falls, a whirlpool, and then gurgling rapids." Ellington studied all the water music he could find, from Handel to Debussy, and responded with *The River*, eight movements ranging in style from delicately classical to swaggeringly big-band.

Appalachian Spring



Appalachian Spring

John Adams

The Chairman Dances
(Foxtrot for Orchestra)

Ewan Clark

Karehana Concerto
NZTrio

Aaron Copland

Appalachian Spring
(original version)

Igor Stravinsky

Symphony in
Three Movements

Saturday 11 September
7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre

We launch fully into our 2027 dance theme with *The Chairman Dances*, an excerpt from John Adams' opera *Nixon in China*. Adams says he was inspired by "the irresistible image of a youthful Mao Tse-Tung dancing the foxtrot with his mistress Chiang Ch'ing, former B-movie queen and the future Madame Mao, the mind and spirit behind the Cultural Revolution and the strident, unrehabilitated member of the Gang of Four." The music sparkles with chimes and high delicate woodwinds as well Adams' trademark hypnotic rhythms.

Then we are thrilled to welcome the beloved NZTrio as soloists for the premiere of an exciting new work they themselves have commissioned, Ewan Clark's *Karehana Concerto*.

Aaron Copland was sought out by the famous American dancer Martha Graham, seeking a ballet score that would capture something essentially modern and American. She offered him the title, *Appalachian Spring*, taken from a line by American poet Hart Crane. Copland responded with this wonderful music evoking expansive landscapes and the pioneer spirit of freedom.

For contrast, we follow Copland with Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements*, which overflows with big illustrative gestures taken from his wartime newsreel pieces. Imagine troops in action, planes on strafing runs. It's a fascinating blend of cinematic drama shot through with the light, restless neo-Classical style he'd been developing.

nztrio
he taonga
wairere



La Valse

La Valse

Jean-Philippe Rameau

Les Indes Galantes
(suite)

Maurice Ravel

Piano Concerto in G major
Shan Liu, piano

Paul Dukas

La Péri
(*Poème dansé*)

Maurice Ravel

La Valse
(*poème chorégraphique*)

Saturday 23 October

7.30pm

Michael Fowler Centre

Louis XV's court composer Jean-Philippe Rameau filled his opera-ballet *Les Indes Galantes* with graceful melodies and dance rhythms energised by drums, bells, and tambourines. Eighteenth-century Paris audiences couldn't get enough of its drama, harmonic complexity, and orchestral colour.

Centuries later, Ravel was never far from the idea of dance in his bluesy *Piano Concerto in G major*, which blended classical refinement with constantly changing kinetic energy, especially in its mischievous third movement. It's a chance for Wellington audiences to enjoy the precocious brilliance of young Auckland soloist Shan Liu as the piano ripples under a merrily tripping piccolo solo, or swoops over the orchestra's strutting march.

Less familiar is Paul Dukas' "Poème dansé" *La Péri*. Written for the dance impresario Diaghilev, its best-known feature is the opening brass fanfare. But it would be a shame to miss the bewitching Péri's dance that follows, praised in a 1921 *Paris Opera* review for its "orientalist and venomously sensual theme."

Maurice Ravel prefaced his score to his "poème chorégraphique", *La Valse*, with this description imagining an imperial court of the 1850s: "Through whirling clouds, waltzing couples may be faintly distinguished. The clouds gradually scatter: one sees ... an immense hall peopled with a whirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth at the fortissimo."

Intended as a tribute to Johann Strauss II, *La Valse* blends Strauss' giddy delight with a *fin de siècle* sense of a world of careless privilege whirling out of control.

Fanfares and Dances



Fanfares and Dances

Béla Bartók

Dance Suite

Gustav Mahler

Rückert-Lieder

Kristin Darragh, contralto

**SOUNZ Commission
with Arohanui Strings+**

Leoš Janáček

Sinfonietta

**Saturday 27 November
7.30pm
Michael Fowler Centre**

Béla Bartók said, “The right type of peasant music is most varied and perfect in its forms. Its expressive power is astonishing, and at the same time it is devoid of all sentimentality and superfluous ornaments... A composer in search of new ways cannot be led by a better master.”

His 1923 *Dance Suite* offers delicious snippets of the musical treasures he discovered among Arabic, Romanian, Wallachian, and Hungarian folkways.

For Gustav Mahler’s *Rückert-Lieder*, he set the poetry of German lyric poet Friedrich Rückert to create beautiful, intimate songs of loneliness and love.

“Don’t love me for beauty or wealth or youth, but love me for love itself.” Mahler gifted that song to his wife Alma; perhaps hers is the “gentle hand” that breaks off the sprig of linden whose scent permeates one song. Another speaks of abandoning the world’s tumult to live, “alone in my love, in my heaven, in my song.” Mahler claimed these lines were “truly me”.

We’ll finish the year with Leoš Janáček’s best known work. His *Sinfonietta* explodes with fascinating colour drawn from his long study of Moravian, Slavic, and Eastern European folk music. *Sinfonietta*’s tremendous opening brass fanfares pull the listener immediately into a large-scale exuberant orchestral tour de force. The asymmetric patterns of Czech folk dances give its melodies an exotic twist and its surprising final harmonies, with their sonorous brass and fluttering strings, rise to a glorious, joyful apotheosis – the perfect close to our season.

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ORCHESTRA WELLINGTON

2027 Single Ticket Pricing

Adult	\$70
Concession (Gold Card Holder)	\$60
Child	\$15
Student	\$20
Under 35	\$35
Community Services Card Holder	\$20

Single tickets on sale from January 15, 2027
through all Ticketmaster channels.

Phone 0800 111 999 or
www.ticketmaster.co.nz

Note: Ticketmaster service and processing fees may apply.
An additional \$1.50 community levy will be incurred on all
single tickets for concerts in the Wellington Town Hall.

All prices are inclusive of GST. Ticket purchases are non-
refundable and non-exchangeable. Details are correct at the
time of printing. Dates, times and repertoire are subject to
change at short notice, and Orchestra Wellington will in no
event be held liable for any loss arising from such change(s).



Orpheus
Choir
Wellington

ORCHESTRA
WELLINGTON

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

SATURDAY

11 DEC

7:30PM

TE WHARE WHAKARAUKA
WELLINGTON TOWN HALL

ON SALE 15 JANUARY 2027
WWW.ORPHEUSCHOIR.ORG.NZ

A photograph of a conductor leading an orchestra on a stage. The conductor, wearing a light-colored jacket and dark trousers, stands on a raised platform, facing the orchestra and holding a baton. The orchestra members are seated in the foreground and middle ground, playing various instruments including violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. The stage is illuminated with dramatic, warm-toned spotlights in shades of red and orange, creating a hazy, atmospheric effect. The background is dark, with some stage equipment visible. The overall mood is one of intense musical performance.

Music for our Communities

Wellington is a cultural capital because Wellingtonians choose to make it one.

As YOUR regional orchestra, Orchestra Wellington has a role to play in making this region a place where music, creativity, curiosity, and connection are part of everyday life. But we don't do that work alone.

A great cultural capital is built by the people who live here. For Orchestra Wellington, that means bringing the music out of the concert hall and into schools, libraries, community spaces and regional venues, from the Kāpiti Coast to the Wairarapa. It means investing in our future artists, creating pathways for tamariki and young musicians, building partnerships across the region, and making space for all the voices of the communities we call home.

These aren't extras around the edges of what YOUR orchestra does. They are the core of our work.

Because an orchestra is more than the performance of masterworks. It is the people who fill the seats, the commission of up-and-coming composers, the employment of Wellingtonians, and the investment in our city's future. The full-time musician who teaches all day and takes the stage to wow friends and family that same evening. The university music student supplementing their study with work that helps pay the bills. The parent who brings their child to their first concert. The friend who says, "you have to experience this." The teacher who opens a door for a young musician. The young composer who takes a risk. The audience member who comes curious and leaves changed. The donors who think "I can't imagine Wellington without Orchestra Wellington".

Every one of those acts of participation helps secure the future of our cultural capital.

This doesn't happen by accident. The culture of Wellington belongs to all of us. And what we choose to participate in is what we choose to sustain.

When you support YOUR orchestra, you help us put extraordinary music in front of today's audiences while creating opportunities for our future. That is why we invite you to be part of celebrating this future, not simply as an audience member, but as a participant in the cultural life of this region.

Thank you for helping us build the future of Wellington as our epic cultural capital.

Hannah Neman

Marketing & Engagement Manager,
Orchestra Wellington

A great cultural capital is built by the people who live here. For Orchestra Wellington, that means bringing the music out of the concert hall and into schools, libraries, community spaces and regional venues, from the Kāpiti Coast to the Wairarapa.

Since 2014, Music to Schools has brought thousands of tamariki face-to-face with live orchestral music – many experiencing it for the very first time.

They hear instruments they may never have encountered, see musicians making music together, and discover that orchestras and musical spaces are places where they can imagine themselves belonging.

To find out more and request a visit, go to www.orchestrawellington.co.nz/music-to-schools

Our ongoing partnership with Wellington City Libraries extends that experience into the community, using music and storytelling to spark curiosity, creativity and connection.

In 2026, we premiered *Between the Lines*, a monthly chamber music series and book club co-created with the New Zealand String Quartet and Victoria University of Wellington's New Zealand School of Music. Hosted at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Wellington City Library, it invited Wellingtonians to listen, read, think and talk together.

In 2027, we aim to expand initiatives like this – community-focused experiences that take music beyond the concert hall and into everyday spaces for everyone to enjoy and find inspiration.

These are the experiences that build a cultural life: opening doors, connecting people and giving Wellingtonians opportunities to discover something new. Your donations help make them possible.



A young musician's first experience of playing alongside a professional orchestra can change what they believe is possible.

Through its Sistema-inspired programme, Arohanui Strings+ works with schools in low-to-medium-decile communities, using music to build confidence, connection, teamwork and self-belief.

Orchestra Wellington musicians contribute as tutors and mentors, sharing their skills and experience while supporting young people to find their own musical voices. The partnership also creates opportunities for students to perform alongside professional musicians, including through the annual SOUNZ Commission for Orchestra and Sistema Youth Orchestra.

Our Orchestra Wellington / Arohanui Strings+ Scholarship Programme goes further, supporting talented young string players with financial assistance, mentoring, lessons and performance opportunities.

This is what investing in a cultural future looks like: giving young Wellingtonians the opportunity to participate, belong and imagine themselves as artists.

Your support helps make that possible.
Find out more about Arohanui Strings+
www.arohanuistrings.org



Arohanui Strings+



Your support gives young musicians more than a chance to perform – it gives them the opportunity to discover what they are capable of.

Our side-by-side programmes afford young beginners, school students, teachers, community musicians and professional players the opportunity share the same stage, learning from one another and discovering what becomes possible when individual sounds become something bigger.

The MENZA Wellington Orchestra Festival brings primary school musicians and their teachers together for a day of rehearsal and coaching with Orchestra Wellington musicians, culminating in a concert shared with family and friends.

Our annual Big Bash, led by Music Director Marc Taddei, brings more than 150 players from across the region together for an afternoon of rehearsal, collaboration and performance.

These aren't simply concerts. They are opportunities to participate – to play, learn, connect and experience the creative power of making something together.

Your support helps us keep those opportunities open to everyone.

**Side-by-Side
experiences**



New Zealand music needs new music – and new music needs the opportunity to be heard.

Since 2018, Orchestra Wellington, SOUNZ Centre for New Zealand Music and Arohanui Strings+ have commissioned new works for young musicians to premiere Orchestra Wellington. These world premieres have become a highlight of our season, giving emerging musicians the experience of creating and performing new work. World premieres of works created through the SOUNZ Commission initiative have been composed by composers such as Natalie Hunt, William Philipson, Keith Moss, Glen Downie, and Gemma Peacocke.

In 2025, we expanded this commitment through the SOUNZ Tarling Trust Orchestral Commission, a new partnership between Orchestra Wellington, Auckland Philharmonia, Dunedin Symphony Orchestra, and Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, supported by the Nicholas Tarling Charitable Trust. As the recipient of the 2025 SOUNZ Tarling Trust Orchestral Commission, Joshua Pearson's *Digital Fenua: Fakatili Te Kiloga Fou*, which looks at the very real effects of climate change in Tuvalu as they look towards becoming the world's first digital nation, received its Wellington premiere in 2026.

Supporting new music means investing in the artists, ideas and sounds that will become part of Aotearoa's cultural future.

www.sounz.org.nz/opportunities



One of the most important aspects of our work is ensuring orchestral music gets out of the concert hall and into communities, sharing stories and creating spaces that welcome tamariki and their whānau.

We're back with Baby Pops in 2027 and putting on our 10th year of Symphony in the Hutt – the much-loved, free annual celebration of local communities and talents!

We're also looking forward to sounding off on Cuba Street in the central city as in past years with Classical on Cuba and CubaDupa. Moments like this bring all parts of our vibrant cultural capital together in one big celebration of collective, artistic vitality.

These experiences give families a way to participate in Wellington's cultural life in ways that spark joy, create lasting impressions, and encourage imaginative perceptions of what our Cultural Capital can be – helping ensure that today's tamariki grow up knowing that the arts belong to them too.

Your support helps us make that invitation as wide as possible.

Baby Pops: A Musical Zoo!
14 March, Wellington Town Hall

Symphony in the Hutt
21 May, Walter Nash Centre, Taitā

Check orchestrawellington.co.nz/events/ for more details.

Family Experiences



**Designed for toddlers,
young children,
and their families,
The Musical Zoo!
introduces the magic
of a live orchestra in
a casual, high-energy
environment.**

We return to the Wellington Town Hall in 2027 with *Baby Pops: The Musical Zoo!* Arranged, composed, and scripted by Orchestra Wellington's Education Composer-in-Residence Thomas Goss, Baby Pops takes children and families on a zoo-themed adventure with plenty of audience participation, lively movement, and interactive musical storytelling.

Young audience members will meet the different instrument families as they bring roaring lions, enormous elephants, cheeky monkeys, witty wallabies, and wise tortoises to life through vibrant symphonic music. Kids are encouraged to clap, dance, and make animal sounds along with the orchestra throughout the performance.

During the performance, attendees will have the opportunity to do an orchestra walk-through while the musicians are performing giving children the chance to get an inside view of what's happening on-stage during the performance!

Baby Pops is a great chance for young audiences to experience music with their whole bodies. This year's zoo theme gives us a fantastic canvas to showcase how orchestra instruments mimic nature and motion, and can take on a multitude of characters.



Baby Pops

A photograph of a male violinist with dark hair and glasses, wearing a black suit, playing a violin. He is in the foreground, slightly to the left. The background is filled with a large, out-of-focus audience seated in a concert hall, creating a sense of a live performance. The lighting is warm and focused on the performer.

Our Music, Your Gift,

Music stirs each of us in a unique way, but it moves us all.

The profound impact of live orchestral music exists in its power to move us deeply, stirring emotions and creating memories that stay with us long after the final note fades. But not everyone has the chance to feel the transformative power of music. Your Orchestra exists to connect with our city and region – on the Michael Fowler Centre stage, in schools, community halls, and neighbourhoods – and we need your help to make it happen.

Donations of any size help us keep our ticket prices low and take music out into our communities so that people from all walks of life can enjoy the power of live performance. We invite everyone to explore our flexible donation options, from a one-off gift when you subscribe to joining our Chair Donor programme, Music Director's Club, or Leave a Legacy initiative, every contribution makes a difference.

As we embark on a new season of unforgettable performances that connect us all, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to you – our generous donors. Your generosity sustains your orchestra, keeps music thriving in our capital city, and ensures it reaches every corner of our community.

You are the power behind the music.

To learn more about leaving a bequest or making a donation, please contact:

Kerry-Anne Gilberd MNZM

Partnership Manager

kerryanne@orchestrawellington.co.nz

or (04) 801 7810



Support

A man with a beard, wearing a black suit, is seated and playing a golden trumpet. He is looking down at his instrument. In the background, other musicians and brass instruments like tubas are visible, though out of focus. The lighting is warm and focused on the man.

Chair Donor

Through our Chair Donor programme, you can honour their talent, artistry, and life-long commitment to music.

Orchestra Wellington's Chair Donor programme builds genuine, reciprocal connections between donors and musicians.

Chair Donor benefits

- Build a relationship with a musician of your choice.
- Watch and enjoy the musical career of your musician – many of our players are involved in other projects alongside Orchestra Wellington
- Enjoy relaxed social occasions with your musician, other Chair Donors and the Orchestra Wellington family.
- Receive recognition in our concert programmes and the Orchestra Wellington website.

Becoming a Chair Donor is easy

- Select a player you'd like to support.
- Involve your friends. Together you can become a Chair Donor by forming a syndicate. This helps make adopting more affordable.
- Contact us. We're here to help with your Chair Donor support and organise your first meeting with your musician.

Become a chair donor from \$1,500 per year

"We love coming along to hear Orchestra Wellington play. They are a group of dedicated musicians who turn out excellent quality and entertaining music. And what we probably love most is that this is our Capital's very own orchestra!"

Current Chair Donors

Chair Donor

Our musicians are the beating heart of Orchestra Wellington, devoting countless hours to providing music that motivates and inspires.

We invite you to support the music and the orchestra you love while getting to know your favourite player at the same time. Through our Chair Donor programme, you can honour their talent, artistry, and life-long commitment to music.

Thank you to our Current Chair Donors

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Kerry Prendergast & Rex Nicholls

Glenda West

“We have supported the Wellington chair donor programme for many years. As Wellingtonians we can be justly proud having such a wonderful Orchestra, Supporting it as a donor assists the Orchestra but also gives enormous satisfaction. Financial support is essential for the Orchestra, but it is a great feeling to be part of it.”

Current Chair Donors

“We believe in and produce excellence in so many ways here in Wellington and Orchestra Wellington with its super orchestral talent, attracts many loyal followers. We support Orchestra Wellington and are chair donors because it is an investment in the high standards that Orchestra Wellington sets, and we love the fact that the Orchestra nurtures and supports local musicians and aspiring talent.”

Current Chair Donors

Join this select community of generous donors

A unique opportunity to both support your orchestra and build a personal relationship with our engaging and inspiring Music Director, Marc Taddei.

Music Director's Club benefits

- You will receive invitations to exclusive events and receptions
- Invitations to exclusive 'behind the scenes' rehearsals and events
- An exclusive Music Director's Club dinner with Marc Taddei
- Support acknowledged in concert programmes and season brochure

Join the Music Director's Club from
\$2,500 individual / \$3,500 couple per year

Thank you to our Music Director's Club Donors

Anonymous

Marion & Geoff Eades

Diana Marsh

"Contributing has brought us closer to Orchestra Wellington and we have made new friends from within the Orchestra. This has given us opportunities to learn more, not just from Orchestra Wellington's performances but also from other events that the musicians are part of. It has broadened our appreciation of classical music."

Current Music Director's Club Patrons

Music Director's Club



Bridging Worlds Through Music

Orchestra Wellington Foundation exist to build a long-term fund that protects the future of extraordinary musical experiences in Wellington.

Every gift helps create a lasting legacy, ensuring today's performances inspire audiences, young musicians and our city for generations to come.

Your gift will bridge worlds

Orchestra Wellington Foundation is the bridge between worlds. Between someone hearing music and it striking a chord within. Between listening to a concert and connecting you with friends. Between youthful passion and professional opportunities. Between ballet and opera and the bringing of these to life. Between visitors wandering Wellington and discovering its beating heart.

You will be gifting to a foundation that transports people to a world of experiences, and be the reason these forever go on.

Legacy in action

Every performance begins with a single note. Your generosity makes tomorrow's performances possible.

To learn more about leaving a bequest or making a donation, please contact:

Kerry-Anne Gilberd MNZM

Partnership Manager

kerryanne@orchestrawellington.co.nz

or (04) 801 7810

Thank you to our Current Legacy Circle Members

Anonymous via The Gift Trust

Leslie Austin

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The Estate of Ailsa Salt

Glenda West



Bridging Inspiration with Legacy

Great orchestras don't just preserve our musical heritage. They create the next chapter.

Every new composition begins with a blank page. Bringing it to life takes artistic vision, exceptional musicians and, importantly, the confidence to invest in something that has never been heard before.

In 2024, Orchestra Wellington Foundation funded Orchestra Wellington's Composer-in-Residence programme, the longest running programme of its kind in New Zealand. Foundation support enabled acclaimed New Zealand composer Eve de Castro Robinson to create *Hour of Lead*, a powerful new work inspired by Emily Dickinson's poem of the same name.

As Music Director Marc Taddei wrote when announcing the residency, "Eve is one of New Zealand's senior composers, and her music draws deeply from our shared contemporary experience."

Premiered as part of Orchestra Wellington's *A Modern Hero* concert, *Hour of Lead* explores themes of pain, resilience and the fragility of life through a distinctly contemporary New Zealand voice. The true success of a new commission, however, is that it does not end with its premiere.

Following its debut with Orchestra Wellington, *Hour of Lead* was selected for performance by Christchurch Symphony Orchestra alongside Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. For a newly commissioned work by a regional orchestra to be embraced by another professional orchestra is a significant achievement.

Every commission enriches Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural heritage. Today's premiere becomes part of tomorrow's repertoire, ensuring future generations inherit not only the great works of the past, but also the music that tells the story of our own time.



"Every Foundation gift represents an investment in possibility. By supporting young musicians at a pivotal stage in their development, we are helping create opportunities that will resonate far beyond a single performance. This is how philanthropy helps shape the future of orchestral music in Wellington."

Diana Marsh, Chair, Orchestra Wellington Foundation



Our 2027 Season hospitality partner, Coney Wines, is a family-owned vineyard located in Martinborough.

Established over 25 years ago, Coney Wines continues its legacy of producing a limited selection of seriously good wines with deep respect for the land, the fruit, and the people who make it all happen. There's plenty of hard work behind the scenes, but Coney has always believed wine should be about the good stuff too – food, family, friends and a bit of fun.

The coolest little cellar door, Rabbit by Coney, is a relaxed, welcoming space tucked away amongst the vines in Martinborough – a little bit different and completely Coney. Think magical secret garden, good wine, tasty little morsels and plenty of room to settle in and stay a while. Open Saturday and Sunday 11am–4pm – Rabbit is an outdoor venue so best to check their social media pages for updates.

The Coney legacy of a small, family-owned winery producing a range of beautiful wines that go perfectly with food, family, and friends is rooted in the same spirit of connection, celebration, and togetherness that sits at the heart of Orchestra Wellington.

For our patrons of legal drinking age, be sure to keep an eye on your inboxes for some special hospitality offers throughout the 2027 season.

Visit www.coneywines.co.nz to learn more



**CONEY
WINES**

ORCHESTRA WELLINGTON

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WellingtonNZ and Orchestra Wellington
share a commitment to keeping the
capital's stages vibrant, its audiences
connected, and its musical life thriving.



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**DEANE
ENDOWMENT
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PARTNERS



Celebration

Saturday 13 March

Symphonic Dances

Saturday 15 May

Shall We Dance?

Saturday 17 July

Appalachian Spring

Saturday 11 September

La Valse

Saturday 23 October

Fanfares and Dances

Saturday 27 November