

APRIL JU



April was born in Christchurch, and began learning the violin at age 5. She has appeared as soloist with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and the University of Auckland Symphony Orchestra. Her performances have included venues such as St Martin-in-the-Fields, St. James' Piccadilly, and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. April has also recorded for the Atoll label.

April is currently a Scholarship student at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she is studying towards a Master of Arts. She is in the studio of Professor Rodney Friend MBE, eminent violinist and former concertmaster of the London and New York Philharmonic Orchestras. Whilst at the Academy, she performed in masterclasses for Jack Liebeck, Michael Dussek, and Jonathan Stone.

Prior to study at the Royal Academy, April graduated from the University of Auckland with a Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours, studying under Stephen Larsen. Whilst studying at Auckland University, she was recipient of the

Anne Bellam Scholarship, Spring Prize for String Players (awarded to the highest achieving string student in Year 2), Sagar Vandewart Scholarship, Sagar Vanderwart Prize (awarded to the highest achieving string student in Year 1), and the Auckland Chamber Music Society Prize, in addition to a First in Course Award for Chamber Music. She was also awarded 2nd Prize at the University of Auckland Graduation Gala Soloist Competition in 2018.

In 2019, April was awarded an Arts Excellence Award from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation. Later that year, she was appointed Concertmaster of the NZSO National Youth Orchestra, in addition to receiving the John Chisholm Concertmaster Prize. She has also performed as a Casual Violinist in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Passionate about Chamber Music, April was the winner of the 2017 Pettman/Royal Overseas League Chamber Music Scholarship, the 2015 University of Auckland Chamber Music Competition, and the NZCT Chamber Music Contest in 2014. She was a member of the Aurelian Piano Trio, who was Festival Debut Artists at the 2017 Lake District Summer Music Festival in the UK. The trio were fortunate to participate in masterclasses with the Gould Piano Trio, Renna Kellaway, Levon Chilingirian (Royal Academy of Music), and Mark Messenger (Head of Strings, Royal College of Music).

She has participated in masterclasses with Baiba Skride, Robert McDuffie, Anthony Marwood, and David Takeno, amongst others. April is fortunate to perform on an Enrico Ceruti violin (Cremona, 1846), on generous loan from the Royal Academy of Music. Ceruti was known as one of the last of the great line of violinmakers from Cremona.

I chose to perform the Sibelius Violin Concerto, as it personally holds a special place in my heart. This work requires the performer to depict many different images, from the bitter Finnish wind in the first movement, to the stoic and confident military like march in the finale. When I am performing, I often compare myself to an artist with a vast palette of colours. The Sibelius in particular allows me to portray a wide variety of textures and colours, and really challenges me to think of what type of painting I am creating for the audience.

I chose to enter the National Concerto Competition as it is a wonderful opportunity for young musicians to hone their skills, and gain experience in a competition setting. It is also invaluable to perform an entire concerto with orchestra, and something I am very grateful and looking forward to!