

Sarah Masters - Clarinet

New Zealand clarinetist Sarah Masters grew up in the rich musical environment of Christchurch, performing as a member of the Christchurch Youth Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra, and enjoying numerous musical opportunities at Burnside High School. Whilst in her 6th form year she began playing with the CSO and freelanced regularly with the orchestra for many years, including during her time studying towards her BMus in Performance Clarinet at Canterbury University, with Gretchen La Roche as her hugely inspirational, influential and encouraging professor. She then moved to the UK in 2002 to embark on postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where she subsequently graduated with an MMus and PGDip as well as the prestigious PPRNCM Diploma in Chamber Music with wind quintet Ensemble 23.2. She was awarded first prize in the Gilbert/Fell Solo Woodwind Competition and also won the Granada Chamber Music Prize with the Akoka Quartet performing Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, a piece she has since performed many times in both the UK and New Zealand. Sarah now enjoys a busy and varied freelancing career, performing with many of the UK's professional orchestras including the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and has worked extensively with the Orchestra of Opera North for many years, hugely enjoying working in the theatre environment and developing her love for the operatic repertoire. She has performed in concert halls across the UK, Europe and Australasia, at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall, live radio and television broadcasts for the BBC, as well as CD and session orchestra recordings.

Alongside her orchestral career Sarah also performs regularly in chamber and solo settings, being a founding member of the Akoka Quartet, Ebonites Clarinet Ensemble, and guesting with other ensembles around the UK. With a broad interest in all musical styles, Sarah has enjoyed collaborations with composer/sonic artist Norm Skipp, Jazz musician and composer Matt Owens and Argentine Tango band Frambuesas. Sarah has appeared as concerto soloist on a number of occasions performing Copland, Weber, and Finzi, and gave the UK premiere performance of Scott McAllister's *Black Dog* for clarinet and wind orchestra at the 2004 BASBWE Festival.

Sarah is currently lecturer in Performance Clarinet at Huddersfield University, and she also works as a Project Leader for the Halle Orchestra's Education and Outreach department. In her spare time Sarah enjoys travelling, learning languages, playing tennis and dancing Argentine Tango. She is very much enjoying the opportunity to be back in New Zealand for an extended stay, due to the current situation with Covid.

Anastasiya Filippochkina - Violin

Anastasiya Filippochkina is a Ukrainian- New Zealand violinist. She graduated from the Kyiv Lysenko Special Music School and continued her studies with Jan Tawroszewicz at the University of Canterbury (BA). During her first year at the University, Anastasiya became a member of the CSO and the NZSO and enjoyed working with them both. With the help of Dame Adrienne Stewart, the Jack McGill Scholarship of Creative NZ, the AMI Insurance Players Development Scheme Award and the Dame Malvina Major Foundation Emerging Artists Excellence Award, Anastasiya went on to gain her Masters Degree from the Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY) under violin professor Oleh Krysa. After her graduation Anastasiya won a position at the Southbank Sinfonia (London, UK), sponsored by Dr Elman Pool - a lovely Dunedin man, who was a distinguished neurologist and philanthropist in the UK. Spending three years in London, Anastasia performed with various orchestras and ensembles, including the London Symphony Orchestra, where she

won the LSO String Experience Scheme. Following this, Anastasiya decided to go back to explore her Ukrainian roots, where she lived and worked with the National Symphony Orchestra and the National Chamber Music Ensemble of Ukraine "Kyiv Soloists", until the situation with covid brought her back to NZ in November 2020.

Anastasiya's family came to New Zealand in the late 90s, after her father Viktor was invited to become a principal double bass player of the Christchurch Symphony. Her mother Anna is a Russian linguist and became creator and director of the Russian Culture Centre of Christchurch. Anastasiya enjoys spending time with her parents and is looking forward to her new future plans.

Michael Lawrence - Piano

After 25 years as head of music at St Andrew's College Michael resigned at the end of 2009. This left him with more time for piano playing and accompaniment work, while doing some private teaching and freelance work at three Christchurch high schools. Michael returned to solo piano playing in 2012 with the first of two recitals at St Augustine's in Cashmere, followed by several appearances in The Piano and St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. After a long absence, he returned to performing in the Great Hall in June 2020 with a programme of Beethoven, Chopin and Debussy.