

FILM SCORE

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra 2013 programme has been announced, and the season promises to be one of the company's best yet. **Sarah Illingworth** spoke to NZSO Musical Director Pietari Inkinen about what's in store.



Photo: Tomasz Wiech

The NZSO kicks off its 2013 season in February with the *Tan Dun Martial Arts Trilogy*. The 15 February concert will be the orchestra's first Auckland show for the year, and will be conducted by Academy Award-winning conductor and composer Tan Dun himself.

Marking the Year of the Snake and the Chinese New Year, the performance comprises Tan Dun's scores from three classic martial arts films – *The Banquet*, *Hero*, and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* – and will be held in The Civic, against what promises to be a stunning backdrop of footage from the films.

Tan Dun has made an indelible mark on the world's music scene, bridging the gap between classical music and popular culture, without sacrificing any measure of calibre. As well as having made an obvious impact within the film world, his music has also been played internationally in top opera houses and by leading orchestras. A gregarious and engaging personality, Tan Dun's New Zealand appearances promise to hold appeal for both committed NZSO audiences, and newcomers to the world of classical performance.

NZSO musical director Pietari Inkinen expressed his excitement at the conductor's visit, calling him "one of the superstars in

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his field. It's going to be very exciting and thrilling for audiences, I know."

Pietari himself is somewhat of a superstar. A Finn by birth, the 32-year-old was appointed to his current position with the NZSO in 2008, and splits his time between the role and globetrotting, guest conducting the many international orchestras that have enlisted him to appear.

"I come [to New Zealand], on average, three times a year. So I spend a few months a year with the orchestra. I'll usually always open the season, come in the middle, and close the season."

Despite his demanding performance schedule, Pietari makes a point of returning annually to Helsinki, Finland – the city that

gave him his start as a conductor – saying it's still one of his favourite places to perform.

"Helsinki Philharmonic was the first top orchestra to give me my break, 10 years ago, and I return to them every year. Helsinki has now built a fabulous new concert hall, where they play now. I was there last May for the first time in the new hall. After all these things that have happened in between, it's really nice to go back to my home country, to a great orchestra and a phenomenal concert hall. It's really nice to go back to my roots on a regular basis."

This cherishing of one's roots is reflected in the inclusion of a number of original local compositions alongside the NZSO's classic repertoire in 2013, and exciting international contributions like Tan Dun's Trilogy.

"Alongside each of my programmes [will be] a New Zealand piece – some already existing ones, and also newly commissioned work from different Kiwi composers," says Pietari.

"We have an artistic team in the orchestra. It's a collaboration of ideas, and we try to cover a wide range of things in the season. Of course, the main focus still being on the well-loved classical repertoire – Romantic, late Romantic, repertoire for a full orchestra. But, as always, it's nice to put in some interesting [new] things."

From the filmic power of the Martial Arts Trilogy to former All Black captain Anton Oliver's narration of *Peter and the Wolf* – which plays as part of *Tall Tales and Tangos* next October – and with a range of classical performances in between, 2013 promises to be an exciting season for the NZSO, one ripe with appeal for those of all backgrounds and ages.

**TAN DUN MARTIAL
ARTS TRILOGY**
15 February | The Civic