

THE
PETTMAN NATIONAL
JUNIOR ACADEMY
of Music

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REPORT:
RAMON JAFFÉ
March 2016

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In March 2016, The Pettman National Junior Academy of Music was fortunate to have international renowned cellist professor Ramon Jaffé visit to not only perform and teach, but to also adjudicate for the 'Competition for Young String Players' (CYSP). Ramon (who currently holds the position as Professor for cello at the Carl Maria von Weber Hochschule in Dresden, as well as being the Artistic Director of the Hopfgarten Chamber Music Festival) stayed in Auckland between the 3rd and 14th of March and during that time maintained a very busy schedule teaching master classes and workshops for the Pettman Academy cellists and Auckland cellists.

Ramon is well known as a virtuoso player, and chamber musician with the Mendelssohn Trio in Germany. However, his most specialized style of music is Flamenco, which has kept him busy presenting flamenco inspired programmes for cello at many important Flamenco Festivals throughout Spain and France.

Ramon shared his insight and expertise on Flamenco cello music with the students in the master classes and workshops, followed by charming everyone with his unique Spanish flare in his recital, which featured tangos and flamencos. This was a great opportunity for the students, as it was a style of music that they may not have been very familiar with.

Whilst adjudicating the 'Competition for Young String Players' between the 4th and 6th March, Ramon Jaffe was thoroughly impressed by the standard of the performances from the age categories. Amongst the many awards given out was the special 'Adjudicators Award', given to only one selected competitor which the panel felt stood out the most for the highest level of artistry. This award was given to Benedict Lim, which stood out to Ramon Jaffe as a remarkable young musician with outstanding technique and musicianship.

Out of the many lessons that Ramon gave during his visit, a particularly intriguing example was when he taught Benedict Lim. During the lesson Ramon used his background of exposure to different musical styles, to help Benedict understand how to best deliver the work 'Tzegane' (Hungarian Gypsy) by Maurice Ravel. Ramon's experience with exploring gypsy music helped Benedict to

interpret the Hungarian Gypsy Style' dramatically by the end of the lesson. Many other students also found their lessons highly beneficial and enjoyed the great breadth of Ramon's musical knowledge.

On Saturday the 5th March, Ramon Jaffé presented a recital alongside Salzman and New Zealand pianist Rachel Fuller. The concert was held at 7pm in the University of Auckland School of Music Theatre and featured the 'Sonata No. 1 in E minor, Op. 38, for piano and cello' by Johannes Brahms; 'Graciela y Buenos Aires' and 'Two Flamencos for cello solo' by José Bragato; as well as 'Duo for 2 cello in G major' by Jean Barriere. The programme was full of flare, passion and colour for the audience to enjoy. However, a particularly special part of the concert was when the Auckland cellists joined Ramon onstage to perform with him José Bragato's 'Graciela y Buenos Aires'. The performance challenged the students to explore an Italian-Argentine style, which they delivered beautifully. The concert was a wonderful experience for both the students, artists and audience.

At the end of Ramon's stay, the concert was repeated in the Turner Centre, Kerikeri. Kerikeri is very Art – oriented town with a large community of amateur musicians. The concert was an amazing success, the audience was captured with the Spanish theme, Ramon's and Edith's playing, and the quality of the Auckland cellists, involving both University of Auckland and PNJA cello students. The Auckland cellists presented Heitor Villa Lobos Bachiana No.1, and together with Ramon and Edith, Vivaldi's cello concerto for 2 cello and cello orchestra.

