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It has been a relaxing Christmas here at NDA world. Number one son loaned me a book by his favourite science fiction author [David Gemmell](#). I enjoyed reading it and told him so, then a week later a parcel arrived containing all 24 Gemmell books. Consequently there has been a lot of hammock time over Christmas with book in hand and glass not too far from the elbow.

Mid-January saw an emergence from the hammock for the two-day [Blue Dragon](#) mountain bike race in the north-east of the state. This excellent event takes in the old tin mining areas around Derby, climbs some [substantial peaks](#) and concludes with a thrilling descent of the [Blue Tier](#). My partner and I (it is a pairs race) had the misfortune to break a chain early on the second day - picture two short-sighted, non-mechanical guys in the dim light of the rainforest trying to focus on tiny black components held at arms length and you will understand why we took 40 minutes to fix the problem and blew our chances. Still, a good time was had by all.

A week later it was down to the Tasman Peninsula for the first of the [Endorfun](#) trail run series on the Tasman Track, which traverses the magnificent dolerite cliffs of the peninsula between Eaglehawk Neck and Fortescue Bay. The next run in the series is [Mt Wellington](#) on Saturday 13 March - highly recommended.

Seeking to recover from all this exercise I discovered Natural Massage at 101 Collins Street, just across the road from NDA Hobart. They're not in the phone book yet and don't have a web site but they do provide an excellent sports massage - so much so that I engaged them to provide **free neck and shoulder massages** for all clients attending NDA courses in Hobart during March. Just put your name down for a massage when you order your morning tea.

Finally, we received a fascinating response to our earlier article on your favourite music. Denis Lisson's deeply insightful letter is reproduced below as a 'classical music 101' for anyone interested in a personal journey of musical discovery. I have added links to relevant YouTube recordings of recommended pieces.

Computing? Not much at all this month I'm afraid so to compensate we are offering **two enrolments for the price of one** on Word Intermediate and Access Intro/Intermediate in Hobart and Launceston next month - please see below for software versions and dates.

Kind regards

Nigel Davies

Director, NDA

You are receiving this newsletter either because you attended an NDA training course and ticked the relevant box on the course review form or because a friend subscribed you. You can unsubscribe automatically at any time by clicking the link at the bottom of the email.

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What's on at NDA this month

New series of TBCITB courses

For several years NDA has been engaged by the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board (TBCITB) to provide IT and business skills training to builders and tradesmen. This month we are mailing information about a new series of courses to the industry - TBCITB members can download them here for [Hobart](#), [Launceston](#) and [Devonport](#).

MCSE / MCPD Diploma courses

We are part way through delivering training to 36 IT professionals in Microsoft's *Certified Systems*

Engineer (MCSE) and Certified Professional Developer (MCPD) qualifications. The training also includes assessment for a Diploma in IT and is largely funded by Skills Tasmania. We are also about to begin delivery of the MCPD / Diploma combination to ten staff from Hobart software company UXC.

IT trainees

Last month we signed up ten new IT trainees to help maintain IT systems in Tasmanian schools. NDA employs the trainees, provides their training in Certificate III or IV in IT and hosts them out to schools and other organisations. Many young people see this as an attractive alternative to full-time study at TAFE or university as the training is fully-funded, they receive an income and (most importantly) acquire practical IT skills and valuable life skills by participating in the workforce.

For employers it is an opportunity to 'try before you buy' at a reasonable hourly rate and without the overheads of performance management, training, holiday pay or sick leave. **Please click 'Reply' or call Kristina on 1300 765 736 if your organisation is interested in employing an IT trainee from NDA.**

Free massage at NDA Hobart courses

Sitting at the keyboard all morning can create painful tension in the neck and shoulders so we are trialling complimentary 10 minute neck and shoulder massages during the lunch break at NDA Hobart courses. The massages are delivered by Natural Massage, traditional Chinese massage therapists. If you can't wait until your NDA course you can call Sam direct on 0433 390 958.

Musical favourites - a personal view

Contributed by Denis Lisson of TAFE Tasmania.

1. Early music

Apart from [Spem in Alium](#) by Tallis, one of my favourite pieces is the [Miserere](#) by Allegri. This work was written as an *capella* for exclusive performance in the Sistine chapel in the early 1600's. It is apparently written in the falsobordone mode, a technique of singing psalms in harmony, following simple chord progressions, and first appearing in Gregorian chant in Spain in the 1480's.

Musicologists state that the main interest of the Miserere lies in the vocal ornaments added by the singers. Notwithstanding this stricture the piece makes a remarkable impact, with the ethereal high sustained notes sung by the trebles.

An interesting adjunct to the mystique surrounding this work is the fact that Mozart committed the piece to memory, and later transcribed it after he visited Italy at the age of 14 in 1770. It remained a papal secret until 1840.

A famous recording by the choir of Kings College Cambridge with Roy Goodman treble, conducted by Sir David Willcocks still takes a lot of beating!

2. Classical period

Mozart is supreme in opera and the piano concerto. For me it is impossible to select a favourite here. His three Da-Ponte operas - [The Marriage of Figaro](#), [Don Giovanni](#) and [Cosi Fan Tutte](#) - have never been surpassed and seldom equalled. However I am limiting my choice to the cycle of 27 piano concertos.

Mozart's visit to Italy consolidated his reputation as an opera composer whilst still a boy. In Italian opera melody reigns supreme, with the voice carrying the major share of the melody. The piano concertos are in effect miniature operas with all the drama and emotion fully realised. The piano substitutes for the voice, and its part is entirely singable. The orchestra provides support and commentary in an equal partnership with the solo piano. In these works the sum of the parts exceeds

the whole. Thus Mozart creates his own mini music drama without the use of voices.

One of the many felicities of the concerti is the prominence allotted to the woodwind instruments and the ensuing dialogue between solo piano and wind, particularly in the slow movements. Nowhere is Mozart's genius more in evidence or more perfectly realised than in these sublime movements.

One final point is worth making when discussing this genre as a whole and this is the significance of Mozart's choice of keys. Mozart wrote only two piano concertos in minor keys. The [d minor concerto K466](#) is dramatic and stormy while the [c minor concerto K491](#) is less theatrical than K466 but tragic and solemn. The remaining major key concertos are equally varied, with D major bright and optimistic and C major grand and ceremonial. In contrast, the key of A major is more luminous and less bright than D major and thus more accommodating for the expression of intimate personal feelings.

I will single out the [A major concerto K488](#) as a special favourite. This work is an uninterrupted flow of melody, part way between happiness and poignancy, without ever permitting the disappearance of an aura as luminous, warm, and radiant as it is discreet. The [slow movement](#), an adagio, is in the remote key of f sharp minor, being the only time that this key was used by Mozart.

Many recordings exist of this work, five of the best being from pianists Solomon, Robert Casadesus, Daniel Barenboim, Murray Perahia and Richard Goode .

3. The Romantic Era

As with Mozart it is impossible with Schubert to rank his masterpieces in the genre of lied, piano sonatas, and chamber music, particularly those works written late in his short life.

I must single out the Piano sonatas in [D major D 850](#) and [A major D 959](#), together with the Impromptus, as being among the most lyrical and most deeply personal in the field of piano music.

The [C major String Quintet](#) is another unforgettable masterpiece, written in the shadow of the composer's impending death.

Limiting my choice to a single work I submit the song cycle [Winterreise](#) as being the greatest in the competitive field of German song. This cycle of 24 poems by Wilhelm Mueller is strongly autobiographical, being Schubert's Winter journey. This music expresses a variety of emotions, but regret and renunciation are his themes. The unpretentiousness and simplicity of Mueller's poems are matched by the simplicity of Schubert's musical texture. His sole interest is in the depth of feeling, not in psychological over refinements. Dreams are the lover's torture and the battle with his emotions is long and despairing.

The many layers of feeling in this work are only slowly revealed with repeated listening. Like all great musical compositions Winterreise may be interpreted by sensitive and accomplished artists in a variety of ways, each time revealing different facets of this intriguing masterpiece. My favourite interpreters of this work are Hans Hotter, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Peter Pears.

4. The Modern Era

I have no problem in declaring my hand for a single work: this is [The Dream of Gerontius](#) by Elgar. Elgar was given a copy of Cardinal John Newman's poem as a wedding present. It was some 14 years later in 1900 that this sacred drama was created. Newman's poem is a dramatic work that appealed to Elgar, who at the time was a devout if unconventional Catholic. It deals with the most profound of human experiences, specifically death and the journey of the soul into the presence of the Almighty.

This work undoubtably divides opinion. For some it is anathema. For others it is a talisman that makes for a deeply moving experience. Many regard this work as Elgar's masterpiece and, together with Britten's [War Requiem](#), Walton's [Belshazzar's Feast](#), Vaughan-William's [Sea Symphony](#), and

Tippett's [A Child of our Time](#), as the pinnacle of British choral music.

Bernard Shaw a lifelong supporter of the composer said that it "reeked of incense", and so it does. However Elgar responded to the text of the poem very strongly. It hit a creative nerve, and released music at once inspired and potent. The final endorsement by Elgar confirms the stature of this work from his perspective. At the head of the score he wrote "This is the best of me; for the rest I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another: my life was as the vapour and is not; but this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine is worth your memory."

One is always looking for the definitive performance of this wonderful work, and as for other unique masterpieces this can be an unachievable goal.

The very finest performances are by the four English conducting knights, Malcolm Sargent, Adrian Boult, John Barbirolli and Andrew Davis, together with Benjamin Britten. For me its Barbirolli by a whisker!

5. Contemporary

[Earth Cry](#) by Tasmanian composer Peter Sculthorpe is a work that evokes the primeval sounds of outback Australia to perfection. Hearing this work one marvels at the deep insight and musical perception that brought forth this composition. It is without doubt in my opinion a minor masterpiece.

This work was originally scored for orchestra and has been recorded by Stuart Challender with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. A few years ago Sculthorpe experienced a composing crisis, during which time he lost the desire to write music altogether. Meeting the young aboriginal didgeridoo virtuoso William Barton slowly restored his equilibrium and they collaborated in several ways. Their musical partnership stimulated Sculthorpe to compose new music featuring the didgeridoo, as well as reviewing some of his earlier works by incorporating this instrument into these compositions. The new version of Earth Cry benefited greatly from this revision. This has been recorded for Naxos by Barton and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra conducted by James Judd, and this version is now the one to go for.

Forthcoming Training Courses

NDA is now able to release the following courses for stand-by enrolment, some at significant discounts on standard rates (**to obtain the discount, please phone Kristina on 1300 765 736** and mention this email when making bookings):

Hobart – IT courses

[Excel Intermediate 2007](#) 10/11 Feb – standard rate \$480

[Visio](#) 11 Feb – standard rate \$285

[Excel Advanced 2007](#) 11/12 Feb – standard rate \$480

[Outlook](#) 15 Feb – 20% discount \$192 (standard rate \$240)

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 18/19 Feb – standard rate \$570

[Word Advanced 2003](#) 22/23 Feb – standard rate \$480

[PowerPoint 2007](#) 25 Feb – 20% discount \$192 (standard rate \$240)

[Excel Introductory 2003](#) 3/5 Mar – standard rate \$480

[Crystal Reports Introductory](#) 4/5 Mar – standard rate \$570

[Outlook](#) 10 Mar – 20% discount \$192 (standard rate \$240)

[Crystal Reports Advanced](#) 11/12 Mar – standard rate \$570

[Word Intermediate 2003](#) 15/17 Mar – **two for the price of one** – \$240 each

[Access Introductory/Intermediate 2007](#) 18/19 Mar – **two for the price of one** – \$240 each

[MYOB Payroll](#) 19 Mar – standard rate \$285

Launceston – IT courses

[Excel Basics 2003](#) 3 Mar – standard rate \$240

[Excel Introductory 2003](#) 3/5 Mar – standard rate \$480

[Word Introductory 2007](#) 11/15 Mar – standard rate \$480

[Word Intermediate 2007](#) 15/17 Mar – **two for the price of one** – \$240 each

[Access Introductory/Intermediate 2007](#) 16/18 Mar – **two for the price of one** – \$240 each

[Word Intermediate 2003](#) 18/22 Mar – standard rate \$480

[Word Advanced 2003](#) 17/19 Mar – standard rate \$480

Launceston – Business Skills courses

[Training Delivery](#) 25/26 Feb

[Assessment](#) 4/5 Mar – standard rate \$285

Devonport – IT courses

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 18/19 Feb – standard rate \$570

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