

GUEST SPEAKER: Ros Giffney, Project Manager, Sistema Aotearoa

We are delighted to welcome back Ros Giffney to update us on Sistema Aotearoa.

Title: An Orchestra for Social Change



Now in its 7th year, Sistema Aotearoa is an independent Charitable Trust which began as a partnership between the APO and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. In 2018 almost 400 children aged between 6 and 14 years will receive high quality supervised group-based orchestral instrument tuition. Based in Otara, the core programme involves children from 24 primary, intermediate and secondary schools (Deciles 1-3). Students are taught by specialist musicians and educators in/after school and in the school holidays. The key offering is positive behavioural modelling in a stimulating, supportive and well managed learning environment where each child can thrive. Children participate in lessons where positive group dynamics, cooperative behaviour and collective learning are actively promoted.

Ros joined Sistema Aotearoa at its inception in April 2011 and is responsible for the overall management and administration of the programme, ensuring effective programme execution, assuring sustainability and growth as well as realising the vision and goals of Sistema Aotearoa. Ros co-presented at the International Society of Music Educators El Sistema special interest conference in Brazil (2014) and was invited to present again in Glasgow last year. In 2014 she was appointed to the Music Education NZ honors board for her services to music education.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello to all U3A members, especially the new members.

Thank you to the members who attended our first general meeting on Waitangi Day and helped to make it such a success. The creativity, humour and knowledge that the five SIG groups - Medical Science and History, Creative Audio Visual, China Past and Present, Mainly Classical Music and Literature – were each able to cram into their ten minute presentation to celebrate New Zealand achievements was commendable. We also had a fun group activity and a special morning tea. It was a very enjoyable and informative meeting. We had about ten prospective members attend the February meeting.

This is a great start and we will be encouraging every member to promote the club. Long-term members are the backbone of U3A Browns Bay but we also need the fresh ideas, growth and enthusiasm that new members can bring. I would also encourage each member to look out for our new members - identifiable by the red dot on their name tag, and make time to talk with them and make them feel welcome.

Convenors' Meeting 6th March after the main meeting

Immediately after the meeting the committee have invited the convenors to meet at the back of the hall. It is a time to meet with the new convenors, update the SIG procedure folders, address any concerns and pass on procedural updates that the convenors will share with their members.

Convenors play a vital role in leading each special interest group where the learning takes place, personal confidence is encouraged, social contacts are made and each

individual shares in the running of the general meeting by participating in the designated group tasks. The special interest groups are the beating heart of U3A.

As part of increasing our health and safety I encourage each person to write an ICE (in case of emergency) contact name and number on the back of your name tag as well as giving this information to your convenor.

Glen Plaistowe

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Active Travellers

Our special interest group presentation for the March 6th meeting will be by Alex Wilson on Cuba, Ian Graham on Fiordland and Maureen Whineray on a Mississippi boat cruise.

Ancient Civilizations

At the first meeting of the year our topic was the Phoenicians, known as the "princes of the sea". Phoenician city-states began to take form about 3200 BC and were firmly established by 2750 BC. They sailed the Mediterranean and as far as England, Ireland and south to Liberia. The Phoenician alphabet is the basis for most western languages written today. Over time the Phoenicians were conquered by Alexander the Great, the Romans, the Ottomans and the Crusaders. New members welcome.

Archaeology

Garry continued with the second programme shown by Graham last year, which is an overseas production, which appears not to have been shown on the mainstream media here, suggesting that there are hidden aspects of New Zealand's prehistory which have been kept secret. Lots of

discussion followed as we examined what is truly archaeology and what is somewhat in the realms of legend or theory.

Art History

Han van Meegeren, forger of Vermeer paintings, was the subject of the talk by Sheila Bagby. Han was an extremely clever man and competent painter. He persevered until he became rich and successful. His second marriage was to the actor Joanna Oelermans. They moved to a villa near Monte Carlo before the Second World War. Han had a basement studio where he practised his forgery. He mixed pigments, used old canvasses and worked out how to emulate oils using Bakelite and a large oven. He painted portraits of wealthy locals for his immediate income. Han's story is to be continued.

Art Pot Pourri

In February Linda showed us a diary beautifully illustrated with 19th century botanical watercolours by Caroline Maria Applebee. Denise shared her impressions of the Banksy exhibition with thought provoking photographs of his murals. Susan bought along a calendar printed on Italian archive paper of botanical prints by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Nanette spoke about plans of the new Hunderwasser Art Centre in Whangarei, before Suzanne shared her observations of a whale bone sword Maori carving at the Auckland Viaduct. Claire enjoyed placing coloured stickers in The Obliteration Room by the Japanese art Yayoi Kusama. Diana spoke of visiting the Objectspace gallery where NZ Jeweller Craig McIntosh's exquisite Argillite stone carvings were on display.

Book

We all discussed books we had read over the holidays. These included: *The Summer Before the War* (Helen Simonson); *The Thread* (Victoria Hislop); *The Light Between Oceans* (M L Stedman); *Love Among the Ruins* (Harry Leslie Smith); *Darkest Hour* (Anthony McCarten); *Don Martin*; *Rise of the Necrofauna* (Britt Wray); *Manhattan Beach* (Jennifer Egan); *A Long Way From Home* (Peter Carey); *Sleeping Beauties* (Stephen and Owen King); *Badlands* (C J Box); *Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Wordly Realism* (Pam Morris); *The Four Ms Bradwells* (Meg Waite Clayton); *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* (T E Carhart); *The Undoing Project* (Michael Lewis); *How did We Get Into This Mess?* (George Monbiot); *The Beat of the Pendulum* (Catherine Chidgey); *Daring to Drive* (Manal Al-Sharif); *Together* (Julie Cohen); *The Mountain Between Us* (Charles Martin); *Isabella* (Alison Weir); *The Invention of Nature* (Alison Wulf); *JFK and the Masculine Mystique* (Steven Watts); *Vivian Maier* (Pamela Bannos); *The Lubetkin Legacy* (Marina Lewycka); *The Friendly Orange Glow* (Brian Dear); *Nemesis* (Agatha Christie) and *Drawn Out* (Tom Scott).

China: Past and Present

Classical Music

At our first classical music group for the year we were thrilled to watch the first video of two of the world famous violinists, Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zuckerman. Both were born in Tel Aviv, but trained at the Juillard School in USA. We heard several brilliant duos for both violins and viola. Perlman and Zuckerman played Etudes-Caprice by Henryk Wieniawski, a concertante by Louis Spohr and a work by Handel. Such virtuosity! We would welcome any new members interested in classical music to join us on the first Friday of each month.

Creative Audio-Visual

A depleted Creative Audio Visual Group (as a result of members holidaying) met at the Boston's to set up the year's programme - it was decided that we continue the alternate meetings being technical ones but also decided that we have

four challenges in 2018 - the fourth one being the Christmas Challenge, which would comprise four images from challenges met during the year. The next photoshoot venue would be the Wynyard Quarter, sometime in March. Consideration was also given to changing the meeting time/day that would make it easier for some members to attend - this will be decided during the month.

Creative Writing

Our stories for the first meeting of the year were based on a painting by Pieter Brugel The Elder, called "Children's Games" Kathy's story was told around boys of the 16th century improvising their own jousting feats. Ellen wrote an interesting piece on boys fascinated by maps. Irene's story posed the thought that this could have been a spiritual experience. All were so inspired by this painting that we will repeat this subject for our next meeting. This will be on 22nd Feb. Please feel free to join us.

Current Affairs

The first meeting of the year concentrated on the new governments first 100 days in office. Members were all asked to indicate which of the new policies they supported and the reason why. They also commented on those they did not support. Overall there was support for the new government. The other main topic of discussion was the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth in New Zealand, and how this has changed over the last 30 years. Possible steps to improve this problem were discussed.

Cycling

Thirteen keen cyclists turned up for the first ride of the year starting at the TeAtatu Peninsula in Harbour View Park. We headed across the motorway and onto the Northwestern shared path and headed towards Auckland. We passed Pollen Island or Motu Manawa Marine Reserve and Traherne Island. Information posts told their story and had photos of birds that inhabit the islands. We then continued to the Waterview reserve and over the bridge to Oakley Esplanade ending up in the grounds of UNITEC. Luckily we found a coffee van and enjoyed our coffee in the park there. After coffee we went to visit Unitec's stunning Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae located on campus.

Exploring Art for Fun

Film Appreciation

Français pour rire

History of Europe

Inventors & Inventions

Diana provoked discussion in the group by introducing us to some lesser impact inventions such as traps for guava moth which is making a big impact on, particularly, guavas and feijoas. Roy played some video from his large collection on the mosquito aircraft rebuilt in Auckland some five years ago. Terry gave us a history of the development of the simple key which was once a work of art through to its current electronic state where it is now possible to lock and unlock your secure valuables using your electronic devices! Wrapping up the session, Scott gave us a humorous account of the reasons for and the vast increase in use and value of Manuka honey and A2 milk.

Literature

Our year started in the usual way with a review of the the books members had read over the holiday period - and what

an eclectic mix that proved to be. Historical fiction from medieval times, life in modern day Paris, the rise of China, autobiographies, thought provoking articles from The Listener, fiction and non fiction from the Middle East, numerous titles with a New Zealand flavour and so on and so on. We are all looking forward to the reading adventures which lie in the year ahead.

Local History

Our first meeting of the year in February consisted of members talking about Historic places visited during the holidays with photos to illustrate. Puhoi (one source said that the expression - up the Boo-hai without a shovel - evolved from the pronunciation of Puhoi by the early settlers.). Tinopai and further North (Dargaville, Rawene, Kohukohu, Hikurangi) brought reminders of early days when Kauri Timber milling, Dairy Factories, Coal mining, and fishing were the prominent activities. Hotels which were social gathering areas - now closed (Mangamuka Bridge and Taheke). Other talks were about the new T.V. series 'Making N.Z.', the first of which looked at buildings. A reading was also presented on the topic of Mansion House, Kawau.

Mah Jong

Making History

CANADA - Bay of Fundy, an extension of the N.Atlantic Ocean that divides New Brunswick from W. Nova Scotia. This bay is about 100kms wide at its mouth and reaches inland for 240kms. The upper reaches of the bay are world famous for the tidal bore, a wave which rushes through twice a day as the tide rises and falls approx 15 metres. Consequently, large salt marshes have built up providing a feeding station for migrating birds, and feeding grounds for marine life including whales.

Medical Science and History

Gabrielle & Ian Graham presented a brief history of the development of robotics in surgery. Development grew (1970's) from the USA's exploration of remote surgery for military purposes, to the 1980's & 1990's. Today, minimally invasive Robot Assisted Surgery is growing in popularity because of being less invasive, lower blood loss, greater accuracy, reduced post-operative pain and shorter hospital stays. The surgeon, despite being seated 3m from the patient, is controlling robotic arms and their delicate instruments with the added advantage of 3D imaging. The "Da Vinci" system (one of several types) is now rapidly being taken up worldwide.

Modern History

Warwick spoke at the February meeting about Cook Strait and its many shipwrecks. The Strait is bordered on both sides by steep rocky cliffs and has many small islands and submerged rocks. The main threat for shipping is bad weather. Since 1851 there have been seven fatal shipwrecks, the worst of which were the Penguin, an inter-island ferry that sunk off Cape Terawhiti in 1909 with the loss of 75 lives, and the Wahine, the ferry from Christchurch to Wellington, which broke up near Seatoun after striking Barretts Reef in April 1968, with the loss of 51 lives. Many of the passengers were drowned when they were driven by strong currents across to the rocky Eastbourne coast. A judicial inquiry exonerated Captain

Robinson from blame, due to the uniqueness of the storm, but the DVD the group viewed, claimed that was a 'whitewash'.

Music Appreciation and History

For our first meeting of the year we started with a music quiz from Youtube, identifying the movies that short pieces of music were taken from. This was a lot of fun but, although most of the 30 music clips were very familiar, it was surprisingly difficult to name some of them. We did find, though, that we had one super-identifier in our midst who was by far the best at remembering the movies. For the second half of the programme we watched 'Giselle The Movie' which is a reinterpretation of the classic love tale - performed by the Royal New Zealand Ballet. We found this difficult to comprehend and decided we preferred the original version.

Music – Mainly Classical

Our meeting at Terry's home had to be cancelled because he was unwell and didn't want to pass it on (later found he had caught pneumonia).

Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes

Heather taxed our brains with several puzzles: Finding the correct collective noun (a Charm of goldfinches, a murmuration of starlings). And song clues: "Who bought a ring for one shilling?", "Who wore size 9 boots". John demonstrated how easy it is to listen to such songs using an iphone! Fay told how mankind over the centuries has coped with the puzzle of finding the area of shapes, especially irregular shapes. John introduced us to a card game combining 4 number using + --, X and ÷ to get 24. Ian had us guessing the meaning of rebus puzzles

such as:

Wetha

 [A bad spell of weather]

Renaissance

Fay spoke about the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman army lead by 22 year old Sultan Memet in 1453. The deciding factors were the weakness of the city, the vision and determination of Memet and his use of cannon to breach the wall. Fleeing scholars took the works of antiquity to Italy, assisting the birth of the Renaissance. Thelma discussed two artists: Hieronymus Bosch (1450 – 1516) whose depiction of heaven and hell in "The Garden of Earthly Delights" reminds one of Salvador Dali. Guiseppe Arcimboldo [1527 – 1593] is best remembered for his whimsical portraits of human heads made up of vegetables, fruit and plants.

Travel

Walking

Friday March. Meadowood, Unsworth Heights.

Meet at 9.30 at the Meadowood Community House in Meadowood Drive, Unsworth Heights and park on the road and not in the Community House car park. There is an easy walk through a number of reserves and tracks. Mainly footpaths and well graded bush tracks. Allow about one hour.

Friday March. Torbay Coastal.

Meet and park at 9.30 Waiake Beach, opposite where Tide's Kitchen used to be. Walk for about one and a half hours, mostly along pavements.