

# ARTSONFRIDAY

## The scene

**Amigos!**  
Spanish guitarist Miguel Trapaga is one of the best-known classical guitar players in Spain. Next week he will be in Palmerston North, playing a free two-hour concert in the Massey University auditorium. Trapaga was born in Cantabria, Spain, in 1967, and studied at two top music conservatoriums, before launching an international career. He has toured the world showcasing Spanish guitar music, and his programme spans music from the last 200 years – with pieces written by famous composers such as Isaac Albeniz, Joaquin Rodrigo and Francisco Tarrega. His visit is sponsored by the Spanish Embassy. The concert is at 5.30pm on June 10, in the Old Main Building auditorium on Massey’s Turitea campus.



**View**  
Centrepunt Theatre is chasing up a sellout season of *Four Flat Whites in Italy* with Pip Hall’s play *Up North*, opening tomorrow night. Set in the unforgiving landscape of New Zealand in the 1950s, the story follows a young woman who is ousted from her family and sent up north to ride out an unexpected pregnancy. Hall, who in 2009 won the prestigious Bruce Mason Playwrighting Award, said the play re-examines the conservatism of the 1950s in a modern context. Meanwhile, Centrepunt’s Alaina Moore says *Four Flat Whites in Italy* exceeded all expectations, with high seat demand meaning the theatre extended running time for a week. *Up North* is at Centrepunt from June 5 to July 3. Pictured above is Chloe Lewer as pregnant, unwed teenager Maggie.

**Listen**  
The sound of world-renowned Welsh composer Karl Jenkins was music to New Zealand’s ears in 2005, when his haunting score was the soundtrack to the movie *River Queen*. His newest work is now being brought to the stage by the Palmerston North Choral Society, in concert on Saturday, June 19. Based on the 13th-century Roman Catholic prayer *Stabat Mater*, the piece incorporates traditional Western music with an ethnic, Middle-Eastern sound. The choir and soloists will be accompanied by Kiwi organist Douglas Mews. The concert begins at 4pm in St Peter’s Church, with tickets at the door.

**Song**  
More than 500 secondary school students from nine schools in Manawatu-Wanganui will raise their voices in The Big Sing 2010, at the Regent on Broadway next Friday, June 11. Each year, secondary school choirs from around the country participate in this New Zealand Choral Federation competition. Each choir has to present a varied 10-minute programme, including at least one New Zealand composition. The top choirs will compete in the National Finals in Auckland from August 9 to 11. On Friday, sessions run from 10am to 4.30pm, with a gala concert at 7pm. Adults \$10, school students free.



So you thought vinyl was dead? Not in Ashhurst, where a DJ is set to open an LP museum and bring his collection of 5000 records back to life. **Michelle Duff** asked Sir Lord Freshly, aka Damian McGregor, to talk about his musical compulsion.

## Soul in the vinyl lives on

**N**OT MANY of today’s four-year-olds are whizzes on a record player, but young Revere McGregor sure knows how to place a needle. He might have an advantage over other kids his age, though. Because out in the shed, he’s got about 5000 of his dad’s records to practise with.

Stacks of records. Lining the walls, plastered across the roof, piled up in crates. From a chair in the corner, Isaac Hayes smoulders. Michael Jackson reclines under a ceiling beam. The Stylistics lean against a speaker.

When CD players were introduced in the 80s, vinyl was quickly outmoded. Some people threw it out. Others gave it away, or packed it into the garage.

But for Damian McGregor, a long-term relationship with the LP had only just begun. From a modest-sized collection 25 years ago, his stack of records has grown to one that fills up an entire room in his Ashhurst home.

“I don’t know how many times I’ve heard – ‘this is the last one, I just need one more’,” says McGregor’s wife, Angela.

Standing in the converted shed where he plans to open an LP museum next month, McGregor grins.

The dim light bounces off his trademark gold tooth, a bling that momentarily likens him to the singers on the surrounding album covers.

“It just bubbles up within minutes,” he admits, of his record-buying compulsion.

“I pretty much know every op shop intimately between here and Wellington and New Plymouth. I hit them so frequently that I don’t need to look through the whole lot, because I can tell immediately which ones are new.”

A Palmerston North local, McGregor grew up in a musical neighbourhood and began playing in bands at age 13.

As a teenager he hit the pub-band circuit, turning his hand to heavy metal, hip-hop, rock’n’roll and whatever else the scene threw his way.

At first, he bought records because they were the format of the day. But when CDs came in and the record began to drop into obscurity, he realised it was more than that.

“What really kind of caught my heart with records was that the records were pressed at the very time that the artist made the album,” McGregor says.

“The album was written, recorded, produced and printed all around the same time. With a CD, the artist may be long gone; it’s just the reproduction.

“It’s the old sound in a different package, whereas [vinyl] is the original package.”

But you would struggle to find any “greatest hits” mega-mixes or pop pap in McGregor’s collection.

Music appreciation is his game, and for him



**Record numbers:** DJ and record collector Damian McGregor in the soon-to-be-opened Wax Museum in Ashhurst, where he has about 5000 records. Photo: WARWICK SMITH

this means authentic sounds. His range is vast, but favourites include Ethiopian and African beats, roots reggae, soul, folk and funk, and eastern, ethnic tunes.

Good music should take the listener back to a place in history, and cultural context is of huge importance, he says.

“It’s all tied in with culture . . . it’s an essential part of the sound. I can’t just be looking for an album, I’ve got to be looking for the time and place.”

And when it comes down to it, genre doesn’t really matter – as long as it moves you in some way, he says.

“I suppose one of my fundamental appreciations of music is rhythm moves your

body, and melody moves your soul. When those two combine, when it’s done with authenticity, the melody will move you within and the rhythm will move your money maker,” he laughs.

“It does tap into your senses in a different way other than touch or taste. You hear, and it creates a sort of emotional reaction.

“[Music] has a certain place in life. It’s an essential component and a natural expression.”

McGregor fossicks for records in op shops, on eBay, or by swapping with other “diggers” – so-called because they dig through crates of records for the best score. On his travels, he began to despair at how many records were sitting in rooms, gathering dust.

About 10 years ago, he took up DJing, with the aim of bringing his musical finds to a wider audience.

This doesn’t always work out. The job of the DJ is to play to the crowd, and if it’s an audience who wants to hear the latest pop hits, nowadays McGregor will just turn the gig down.

“I make some compromises, but I never sell out. I’ve tried kind of serving up something that I wouldn’t consume myself, but it’s not a good place to be, it’s not good for your soul.”

Sadly, the general popular audience just follow a familiar sound, he says.

“They’re not making choices by quality or composition. The companies are just saturating them with the sound and they’re not making an informed choice. When you’re up there [in the DJ box] you’ve got to remind yourself that it’s up to you to educate, not to put it on the plate.”

Being a DJ is now seen as “cool” by a young crowd – sometimes cooler than being in a band. This is ridiculous, he says.

“It’s like saying the person that serves you in McDonald’s is better than the chef down at Dejeuner, you know.

“It’s the fashion accessory, whereas for me it’s a means to educate and inspire.”

A couple of years ago, he began a series of musical lectures with his LPs at the Palmerston North library, and decided to open his collection to the public.

With a few final touches, The Wax Museum will be open in a couple of months. Then those who missed the Johnny Johnsons, Herbie Manns, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Mahmoud Ahmeds of the world the first time round can come and get their fill. And those who were there can reminisce.

“The whole idea of the museum is kind of like a vinyl haven, really, where records never die,” McGregor says.

“And not only do they live again, but they get to see the light of day.”

■ Donations to The Wax Museum are welcomed. Inquiries can be directed to McGregor at damian.mcgregor@twaa.co.nz.

## TICKETS to the Royal New Zealand Ballet’s Meridian Season of Carmen

The Manawatu Standard is giving away 5 double passes to *Carmen*, the stuff of legends. Ruthless, fiercely independent, and passionate, she manipulates every situation to her favour.

Performed to Georges Bizet’s classic score, the Royal New Zealand Ballet brings to life the story of the world’s most famous man-eater in a vibrant, contemporary dance work.

Set in the metropolis of modern-day Rio de Janeiro, Carmen works in a cigarette factory by day and hangs out with a gang of low-life criminals by night. When José makes the mistake of falling in love with Carmen, things spiral out of control. As José’s world falls apart, Carmen’s desire to live life on her terms sets a course that can only lead to disaster.

Choreographed by Didi Veldman for the UK’s Northern Ballet Theatre (Dracula), *Carmen* is dramatic dance theatre at its best and is performing at the Regent on Broadway on Tuesday 29 June and Wednesday 30 June.

**To be in the draw to win:**  
**Post:** your completed coupon to NZ Ballet Competition, PO Box 1255, Palmerston North  
**Email:** your details to competitions@mnl.co.nz

For ticket information go to [www.ticketdirect.co.nz](http://www.ticketdirect.co.nz)  
Entries close 5pm, 15th June



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