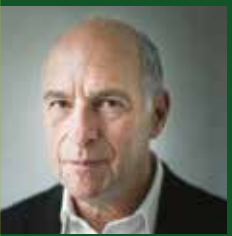


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Welcome

A recurring theme of my welcoming messages to the Newbury Spring Festival in recent years has been how, despite any turmoil we may find ourselves in on a national or international level, the Spring Festival remains a constant, bringing world-class musicians to Newbury for two weeks of joyful music. This message is as true this year as ever.

My sincere thanks to all supporters, artists and audiences for continuing to enable the Festival to thrive. I hope you have an interesting and entertaining fortnight.

HRH The Duke of Kent KG



It is with great pleasure that I bid you welcome to the 2026 Newbury Spring Festival – a fabulous programme with music and events for everyone. We are all still riding on the wave of enthusiasm from last year's hugely successful Festival which opened with a spectacular Festival Parade through the town centre. I am delighted that, through the whole-hearted support of the Greenham Trust, we started the 2026 Festival with an equally exciting Parade, and I hope you were able to join us to cheer us on. This opening event firmly anchors the Newbury Spring Festival in our local community.

One of the many wonderful features of the Newbury Spring Festival is the emphasis on young people. For example, Sound Beginnings, for very young children, is held at Sheepdrove Eco Centre and this year will feature Stravinsky's Firebird. The Friends of the Festival support education projects in a variety of ways including music workshops for children and free tickets. I am absolutely delighted that, this year, we will welcome the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra. Their concert on 10 May will include Elgar's cello concerto performed by a winner of the Windsor Festival String Competition – a great example of links across the Royal County of Berkshire.

My deepest thanks to all our sponsors, our dedicated volunteers and all those in the Friends – your support is vital to us. Our brilliant Festival Director, Mark Eynon, continues to attract world-class musicians and this year they include The Sixteen, The Philharmonia Orchestra and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra to name but a few. Ashley Morris and Jane Pickering are the fantastic team who drive the administration of the whole Festival forward; the organisational skills they display are nothing short of miraculous. My sincere thanks to them and to all the Board members who carry out their roles with such great commitment and enthusiasm.

Please tell all your friends about this magnificent Festival with its myriad venues – which are jewels of the most special places in the West Berkshire countryside and environs. I very much look forward to welcoming you to these outstanding concerts and events.

Graham Barker DL
Chairman

The Festival Director's Introduction



Welcome to the 2026 Newbury Spring Festival, which in its programme this year at St Nicolas Church includes four large-scale orchestral concerts, and a performance by our Festival Chorus, all featuring leading young conductors and soloists.

The London Mozart Players conducted by Jonathan Bloxham open the Festival with a programme that combines classical favourites with contemporary innovation. Horn soloist Ben Goldscheider, recognised as one of the leading musicians of his generation, returns with Mozart's ever-popular Horn Concerto No. 4, and also gives the Festival debut performance of *Sirens*, a new work written for him by GRAMMY-nominated composer Anna Clyne, one of today's most important contemporary composers.



Ben Goldscheider

The following Saturday the Philharmonia Orchestra in their 80th anniversary year, is conducted by rising star Adam Hickox, with Alim Beisembayev, winner of the Leeds International Piano Competition in a much-anticipated performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4.



Alim Beisembayev

We also welcome back, for our last night, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, performing Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* and Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with soprano Elizabeth Watts. Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6 Pathétique* concludes the programme conducted by Tom Featherstonhaugh, also making a welcome return to Newbury, for what promises to be a powerful and moving evening.

Building on our commitment to local community engagement, education and opportunities for young

talent, I am also delighted to welcome for their Festival debut the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra with their conductor Jonathan Burnett who will be joined by Danish-American rising star cellist Jonathan Swensen, winner of the Windsor International String Competition in 2019. Now enjoying a flourishing international career, Jonathan performs Elgar's Cello Concerto, one of Britain's most loved works, alongside Sibelius' *Symphony No. 1*.



Hilary Cronin

Also returning to St Nicolas Church will be our own Festival Chorus in a performance of the original version for two pianos of Brahms' German Requiem, conducted by chorus master Tom Primrose and featuring two outstanding young British singers, soprano Hilary Cronin and baritone James Atkinson.



The Sixteen

Further choral performances include Harry Christophers and The Sixteen at Douai Abbey and VOCES8 returning to St Martin's, East Woodhay, which support a wide-ranging chamber music series from solo recitals to chamber ensembles. I am much looking forward to hearing Irish pianist Barry Douglas at the Corn Exchange, performing works by Schubert and Prokofiev alongside Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata. Renowned brass ensemble



Barry Douglas

Septura return after their huge success last year, while Ireland's Fidelio Trio and the Pavel Haas Quartet on tour from their home city of Prague, reinforce the Festival's reputation for presenting world-class classical music of international quality.

The Festival's world music and genre-crossing events bring global influences to Newbury. At the Corn Exchange, the Romano Viazzani Ensemble present an evening of Tango, combining traditional tango with original arrangements and live dance. Also appearing are the Budapest Café Orchestra, whose concert draws on gypsy, folk and European café traditions in a fast-paced and virtuosic ensemble performance. And don't miss Scottish



Jess Gillam Trio

fiddle quartet RANT, who will also make a welcome return to the Festival at the Corn Exchange.

Jazz, cabaret and crossover music form a vibrant strand of the Festival programme, featuring many of the UK's best-known and most-loved artists.



Soul Sanctuary

On the opening night we are delighted to welcome jazz clarinettist Kenny Martyn with American vocalist Sarah Hayes and their band for an evening of Big Band Swing, while the following week star saxophonist Jess Gillam appears in concert with her trio, following her free public masterclass. In fact the saxophone also appears in a couple of rather unusual combinations this year: Huw Wiggin with harpist Oliver Wass at Highclere Castle and, at Donnington Priory, Canadian saxophonist David Zucchi joins forces



Ballet Central

with Spanish accordion player Inigo Mikeleiz-Berrade, the MZ Duo. I am also very much looking forward to welcoming from London the uplifting Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir who will offer a free outdoor performance before their concert at the Corn Exchange. Further

highlights include performances from Joe Stilgoe and Liza Pulman, Dominic Alldis with his trio and Ian Shaw with Jamie Safir and Iain Ballamy, all acclaimed figures on the national and international jazz and cabaret scene. I am also looking forward to Ballet Central's annual visit, to Charles Court Opera's gala programme of Gilbert & Sullivan favourites and on our final night Flowers Band, the 2024 National Brass Band Champions of Great Britain.

Supporting emerging performers remains a central part of the Festival's mission. The Young Artists Lunchtime Series at the Corn Exchange showcases musicians across a range of styles and disciplines. German baritone Florian Störtz presents a lunchtime recital featuring Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, alongside songs by Liszt, Müller-Hermann and Richard Strauss. The series also includes from the UK Ensemble Renard, Paddington Trio, Fibonacci Quartet, Immy Churchill Jazz Quartet, and who knows from which country, the winner of the Festival's own 2026 Sheepdrove Piano Competition, all continuing the Festival's commitment to championing the next generation of artists.

There is so much to look forward to over the coming fortnight which, thanks to our loyal sponsors, our Festival Friends and you our audience, is truly a festival for everyone: two weeks of world-class music!

Mark Eynon
Festival Director

Supporting the Festival



It feels like the last twelve months have gone by quickly, and a lot of things have changed in the world, but the Festival remains something to look forward to. We have another wonderful programme of events with something for all the family to enjoy.

One of my many roles continues to be helping secure the financial security of the Festival. It is no secret that we receive no public funding and rely entirely on the generosity of the Friends of the Festival, Charitable and Private Trusts, and individuals giving to the Festival. I would of course always welcome anyone wishing to discuss ways they might support the Festival financially. There are lots of ways we can explore this, from monthly giving to one-off donations and Legacy gifts.

It is always a difficult thing to consider, but I encourage you to think about leaving a Legacy gift to the Festival. Leaving a gift to the Newbury Spring Festival in your Will is a very special way to support our work, ensuring that your passion underpins the musical engagement of future generations. If you've enjoyed the Festival over the years and are determined to see the tradition continue to be celebrated and nurtured, a legacy offers an

opportunity to make your support for us permanent and enduring.

Beyond that, perhaps you've thought of a new initiative that we haven't? Perhaps you'd like to sponsor an event in memory of a loved one? There are lots of options that I'd be pleased to explore with you. If you're interested in becoming a sponsor please do come and talk to me.

It is not only financial support that we rely on. The Festival thrives as a result of the goodwill and generosity of so many local organisations and individuals. That ranges from companies that gift us the use of venues, storage space and equipment, through to the loyal team of volunteers who steward each and every one of our concerts, and those who give up their time to help in the Festival office.

We also have a wonderful team of freelance staff who come together to help us deliver this exciting, but busy, two weeks. I'm grateful to them all for the help and support they offer in their respective areas of expertise.

I look forward to seeing you all during the Festival, for what promises to be another great two weeks of world-class music across the region.

Ashley Morris
General Manager

Newbury Spring Festival



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Friends of the Festival



On behalf of the Friends of the Newbury Spring Festival, it is my great pleasure to offer you a very warm welcome to this year's Festival programme.

This season promises to be an exciting one. As you may already be aware, the programme brings together a wonderfully rich and varied range of music and performances, with so many outstanding artists joining us. Whether you are discovering something new or returning to a favourite performer, there is truly something here to inspire everyone – I hardly know where to begin.

The Festival continues to thrive thanks to the generous support of our Festival Friends. Your contributions, both through membership subscriptions and the time and enthusiasm you give to support initiatives throughout the year, are vital to the success of the Festival.

Your support not only helps sustain the Festival itself, but also plays an important role in creating opportunities for younger student musicians. In addition to concert subsidies, the Festival has been able to offer activities such as a Gospel Workshop, instrumental masterclasses and the chance for young performers to experience world-class professional musicians up close – right on their own doorstep!

Becoming a Festival Friend also brings the benefit of priority ticket access before public sale, helping members secure seats for the performances they most want to attend.

With this in mind, the Friends Committee is also working to strengthen our connections with members throughout the year and to keep you informed about plans and developments for each season. As part of this, we are delighted to be planning a special Autumn concert at Welford Park – please save the date: **Sunday 27 September**. Further details will be shared in due course.

And if you ever feel like getting more involved – whether by sharing ideas, helping out occasionally, or joining the Friends in supporting the Festival – we'd always love to hear from you.

Thank you for being part of the Festival, and we hope you enjoy a wonderful season of music.

Georgie Robertson
Chairman, Friends of Newbury Spring Festival

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Weddings • Events • Meetings



Saturday 9 May • 4.30pm
Starts at Newbury Methodist Church

Festival Parade

Generously funded by Greenham Trust



Following the success of our inaugural Festival Parade in 2025, our wonderful Bandmaster Puppet returns to mark the beginning of this year's Festival.

Following a route through the town centre that culminates in the Market Square, she will be interacting with a variety of performers along the way.

We're working again with the Corn Exchange, Newbury and 101 Outdoor Arts to bring this vibrant celebration to the town centre.



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Those Kings of Swing

Kenny Martyn and his Orchestra • Sarah Hayes vocals

Sponsored by Graham & Joanna Barker



Step back in time and experience the golden era of Big Band Swing!

Liverpool-born Kenny Martyn, a celebrated clarinetist and bandleader, brings his renowned big band to the Corn Exchange for one unforgettable night. Having played to critical acclaim at the London Palladium, the Barbican, and the Royal Albert Hall, Kenny leads a dazzling tribute to the greats of swing.

Featuring special guest vocalist Sarah Hayes, flying in from New York for this exclusive UK performance.

Join us for a night of exhilarating music celebrating the timeless legacy of Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Artie Shaw and many others.

An evening of swing classics for music lovers of all ages.



Kenny Martyn

Kenny Martyn was born in Liverpool and began music lessons on clarinet from the age of six.

At seventeen years old, Kenny won the Open Cheltenham Music Festival where he performed the Sphor Clarinet concerto and a jazz swing feature accompanied by his father on piano. The adjudicator was Lady Evelyn Barbiroli, and it was her express recommendation to 'Don't ever stop playing jazz'. Kenny began stylising Benny Goodman, Sid Phillips and Acker Bilk.

At nineteen years old, Kenny won the BBC television Talent contest (instrumental section) *Rising Stars* and it was here that Frankie Vaughan invited him to join his management stable. This began a long association with the great showman and especially fortunate for Kenny, as former members of the Goodman orchestra were among his orchestra! This allowed him to study and discuss the finer points of Goodman technique. Kenny was later invited to Washington DC, to play for the famous Brecker family, who endorsed Kenny and allowed access to Benny's Goodman's music library.

He has performed at many distinguished venues, and has played to critical acclaim in New York, Hong Kong, the London Palladium, the Barbican, the Royal Albert Hall, and is a regular headliner aboard the Queen Mary.

Kenny's breathtaking clarinet virtuosity ensures the timeless legacy of Jazz Clarinet lives on for audiences of all ages.



Sarah Hayes

Vocalist and bandleader Sarah Hayes has been at the forefront of New York's music scene for the last 22 years, performing jazz and swing standards with numerous bands and orchestras, lighting up New York's finest jazz clubs and wowing internationally with her vibrant voice, song stylings, enormous repertoire and sunny personality.

Sarah's singing career started at the tender age of five in her hometown talent show in Monticello, Florida. She belted out her own bluesy rendition of *Oh John the Rabbit* complete with backup singers. Hearing the applause she was hooked.

Sarah has had the distinction of working with some of New York's finest musicians including dear friend, the late Benny Powell, Les Paul, Tommy C. James, Ken Peplowski, Steve Williams, Dick Hyman, CANDIDO, the late John Colianni, Jay Leonhart, Joe Cohn, Lee Musiker, Jack Wilkins, Wes "Warmdaddy Anderson", Christian McBride, Bob Kaye and Bobby Porcelli among numerous others.

Sarah performs regularly with the Artie Shaw Orchestra, Bensen-Scott Big Band, her own septet, Swing Society, as well as her smaller trio and quartet. When not traveling, Sarah can be seen weekly in New York's finest jazz clubs.

London Mozart Players

Ben Goldscheider horn • **Jonathan Bloxham** conductor

Sponsored by Mrs Rosamond Brown and Kilfinan Trust



© Kaupo Kikkas

Elgar *Introduction & Allegro*
Anna Clyne *Sirens*
Mozart Horn Concerto No. 4
INTERVAL
Mendelssohn Symphony No. 1

Ben Goldscheider is recognised as one of the leading musicians of his generation. Tonight he makes a welcome return to the Festival with the London Mozart Players. He'll be performing the ever-popular Mozart Horn Concerto No. 4, but he will also play a new work *Sirens* by GRAMMY-nominated composer Anna Clyne.

Dedicated to tonight's horn soloist Ben Goldscheider, the music draws on the myth of the sirens who lured sailors to their doom with their irresistible voices. Working closely together, Anna and Ben pushed the boundaries of the horn to conjure the sirens' hypotonic sound world; ethereal, beguiling and completely entrancing.

The concert opens with Elgar's ever-popular *Introduction & Allegro*, and after the interval Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 1 sparkles with the classical spirit of Mozart, while the symphonic fingerprints of Haydn and Beethoven forcefully emerge throughout the composition.

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) *Introduction and Allegro for strings, Op. 47*

Edward Elgar's father, William, was a versatile musician who was apprenticed to a London music publisher before moving to Worcestershire, where he kept a music shop, tuned the pianos of the local gentry, played the violin in the orchestra at the Three Choirs Festival and for almost forty years served as organist at Worcester's Roman Catholic Church. Young Edward learned his craft among the multi-faceted musical activities at home and in his local area – as violinist, conductor, composer and bassoonist, coach to the staff of the County Lunatic Asylum and member of William Stockley's orchestra in Birmingham, which gave the first professional performance of one of his works – the *Sérénade Mauresque* – in 1883. In 1889 he married Alice Roberts, daughter of a major-general whose family were shocked by her attachment to an unknown musician. History has thoroughly vindicated her choice! A move in 1890 to London, where national musical life was dominated by academics from the conservatoires and Oxbridge, gave him rich opportunities as a listener but few as a self-taught composer, and he and Alice returned to Worcester the following year, dispirited but determined.

The decade from 1895 to 1905 swept Elgar from local activity to regional, national and international distinction. Festivals in the midlands and north of England commissioned his oratorios, and the brilliance and originality of the 'Enigma' Variations, first heard in London in 1899, finally established him as the most distinctive voice in British music. Masterpieces and honours followed in quick succession: *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, the first 'Pomp and Circumstance' march, the *Coronation Ode* for King Edward VII; a three-day Elgar Festival in London in 1904, a knighthood, and honorary degrees from Cambridge, Oxford and Yale.

On the crest of this wave, the *Introduction and Allegro* was written in 1905, at the suggestion of Elgar's publisher, August Jaeger (*Nimrod of the Enigma Variations*), to show off the brilliance of the string section of the newly-formed London Symphony Orchestra. Reminding Elgar of a particular performance of one of the Brandenburg concertos, Jaeger suggests (in a startling picture of J S Bach as showman), 'a real bring down the House torrent of a thing such as Bach could write ... you might even write a modern fugue for strings.' Elgar took him at his word, even down to the fugue, and laid out the work, echoing a baroque concerto grosso, for string quartet and string orchestra.

However, there is nothing 'neo-baroque' about the music. It is richly scored, with the main orchestra divided into nine parts and the solo quartet woven

flexibly into the texture. The music sweeps across the full range of the instruments, working diverse elements into a panorama of changing moods. The introduction sets the scene with a muscular, jagged theme, followed by an extended presentation of a lyrical melody, sketched on an earlier visit to Wales when 'on the cliff, between blue sea and blue sky, thinking out my theme, there came up to me the sound of singing'.

An urgent, arching theme in the major key announces the start of the *Allegro*, and a further idea in vigorous repeated notes leads to a climactic version of the jagged opening, now in the major and approached by a treacherously stratospheric unison scale. A brief return to the 'Welsh' melody rounds off the exposition when, in place of the traditional development, we are confronted by what Elgar described as 'a devil of a fugue' – perhaps devilish both in its technical demands and its angular, dissonant shapes, reminiscent of the demons in Gerontius. The devils leave the stage (cellos and basses the last to go) and a recapitulation of earlier music leads to triumphant statements of the opening arpeggio theme (now marked with Elgar's favourite '*nobilmente*') and the 'Welsh' melody, capped with a brief, showy coda.

Anna Clyne (1980–) *Sirens* (2025)

Described as 'a radical melodist with a painter's eye', Anna Clyne is one of the most performed contemporary women composers. Her extensive catalogue of some 80 works – ranging from large-scale orchestral and choral scores to chamber music and vocal and instrumental solos – includes a number of pieces directly inspired by the visual arts. She works regularly with choreographers, filmmakers and visual artists, and for her recent work *Palette* created a series of her own original abstract paintings to accompany each movement.

Born in London and now resident in the United States, Clyne was composing by the age of seven; four years later her music was heard at the Oxford Youth Proms. She studied at Edinburgh University and Manhattan School of Music and has worked as composer in residence with leading orchestras in the UK, Europe and the USA. She received an Ivor Novello Award in 2025 for *Orbits*, an ecstatic work for choir and solo violin. Her work draws on tonal materials, applied through a vivid and wide-ranging aural imagination to create an individual style capable of extremes of expression. As a development from this, several of her works explore electronic processes, including the Augmented Orchestra, a computer-controlled manipulation of orchestral sounds developed with her husband, sound designer Jody Elff.

Sirens is dedicated to tonight's horn soloist Ben Goldscheider and received its premiere yesterday (8 May) at London's St Martin-in-the-Fields. The music draws on the myth of the sirens who lured sailors to their doom with their irresistible voices. Working closely together, Anna and Ben pushed the boundaries of the horn to conjure the sirens' hypnotic sound world; ethereal, beguiling and completely entrancing.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Horn Concerto No. 4 K. 495

- 1 *Allegro moderato*
- 2 *Romanza: Andante*
- 3 *Rondo: Allegro vivace*

Mozart's four horn concertos were written in the 1780s for the virtuoso Ignaz Leutgeb who, like Mozart, had moved to Vienna from the court of the Archbishop of Salzburg. In spite of the age difference – Leutgeb was twenty-four years Mozart's senior – they were on good terms: Mozart was in the habit of writing teasing marginal notes on Leutgeb's music, which he seems to have taken in good part, and they were often in each other's company in Mozart's last years.

Horns at that time had no valves and could play only a limited range of notes with ease; many of the intermediate notes, needed to play complete melodies, could only be produced by 'hand-stopping' in the bell of the instrument – a difficult technique, beyond all but the best players. It's not surprising, then, that horn concertos from this period are comparative rarities; the few models that Mozart might have known included one by Haydn, also written for Leutgeb some twenty years earlier. However, as in all his concerto writing, Mozart shows an immediate grasp of how to make a horn solo effective. He doesn't try to push obvious virtuosity; instead, he gives us a wonderful revelation of the instrument's lyrical capabilities, without, of course, forgetting its outdoor and hunting connections. In the orchestra, the oboes are prominent, their more plangent tone colour setting off the warmth of the soloist. There are two more horns in the orchestra, and Mozart uses them discreetly, reserving them for *tutti* sections where their sound seems to answer the soloist from a distance.

After the orchestral exposition of the first movement, the soloist enters with a leisurely reconsideration of the material, adopting a more emotional tone for the minor keys of the development. The *Romanza* is a continuous flow of melody, growing from a swaying opening theme that appears three times and frames two contrasting episodes. Designed to make the most of Leutgeb's unique abilities (a reviewer said he could "sing an adagio as perfectly as the most

mellow, interesting and accurate voice") the melodies unfold with an effortless blend of variety and coherence. The Finale takes us back to the hunt – and to Flanders and Swann, whose joke with the movement Mozart would surely have greatly appreciated.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Symphony No. 1 in C minor Op. 11

- 1 *Allegro di molto*
- 2 *Andante*
- 3 *Minuetto. Allegro molto – Trio*
- 4 *Allegro con fuoco – Più stretto*

At a dinner given for Felix Mendelssohn's fifteenth birthday, on 2 February 1824, his teacher and family friend Carl Friedrich Zelter toasted him as 'an independent member of the brotherhood of musicians, in the name of Mozart, Haydn and old father Bach'. His tribute puts Mendelssohn, at an extraordinarily early age, in the lineage of great Austrian/German composers who already had, and still retain, their canonic status. By that date, the young composer was already at work on his first symphony – at least, his first symphony for a full orchestra with wind and brass; since the age of twelve he had already completed a dozen symphonies for strings, as well as several concertos for piano and violin.

Mendelssohn was born into a wealthy and intellectually distinguished family; his grandfather was the noted Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. His father, Abraham, renounced his Jewish roots and in 1816 the children were baptised into the Lutheran church, adding 'Bartholdy' (a name that Felix preferred not to use) to their surname. Together with his older sister Fanny (an equally gifted musician) and two younger siblings, he received a broad and intensive classical education. As well as music, their stimulating family environment included art and literature, foreign visits and distinguished acquaintances – among them the grand old man of German culture, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who proclaimed that Felix and Fanny were "the future of German music". From early years, brother and sister worked with professional musicians, who gathered at their home to showcase their latest works in Sunday afternoon concerts that attracted a distinguished audience. Felix's First Symphony was performed on 14 November 1824 at one of these gatherings, to celebrate Fanny's nineteenth birthday.

In this symphony, the young Mendelssohn shows a phenomenal command over the established techniques and structures of symphonic writing. Even more impressive is the energy that he brings to the task. The first movement fires off with a plunging

minor-key theme that might belong to a romantic opera (he had already tried his hand at several operas). It's the largest orchestra that he has written for so far; he revels in the power of the wind and brass choir and gives the timpani rhythms all of their own. Soon he's enjoying the contrasting colour of woodwinds alone, and throwing a jaunty second idea between wind and strings. After another big *tutti* section, development of the opening idea dominates the central part of the movement and builds towards the recapitulation of the original themes, where in due course cellos have some delicious counter-melodies. At one point it seems that the movement is going to end in a major-key 'hurrah', but a long horn note intervenes, leading to some mysterious exchanges and a dramatic close.

The *Andante* reverses the emotional contour of the first movement, with a peaceful opening melody alternating with a more agitated theme introduced by each string section in turn. In this flexibly constructed movement, melodies appear in different instrumental colours. Filigree decoration, first on violins and then on flute, surround the opening theme on its recurrences; cellos briefly escape their bass-line role, to sing in their upper register a theme initially heard high in the woodwind.

The *Minuetto* sets off at a brisk, chunky tempo, faster than a minuet but slower than a scherzo, written with the unusual time signature of 6/4 – six crotchets (3+3) in each bar. The *Trio* section accompanies a chorale-like melody with simple broken chords, and returns to the Minuet via a long transition where hushed timpani create ominous expectation. When he took the symphony to London four years later, Mendelssohn wrote to his father that the movement 'bored him to tears', it was so 'monotonous and repetitive', and he arranged the scherzo from the Octet to take its place. However, perhaps realising that the original movement is more in keeping with the rest of the symphony, he restored it for publication.

The *Finale* starts after Haydn's manner, with a theme in short repeated sections and a vociferous *tutti*. But then comes a bagful of surprises: first, a series of pizzicato chords that turn out to be the accompaniment to a wide-spreading melody for solo clarinet; then, after some noisy fanfares, a development of little phrases from the theme, thrown from instrument to instrument; and to cap it all, and show Mendelssohn's academic credentials, a fugue that begins in the strings and soon involves the whole orchestra. The whole process is repeated, leading this time to a final burst of speed and excitement, and a final blaze of C major chords.

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Ben Goldscheider

Ben Goldscheider has premiered over 50 new works for horn, spanning concerti, solo, chamber and cross-genre projects, including those incorporating live electronics and lighting. In the 2025–26 season he gives world premiere performances of *Sirens* by Anna Clyne with the London Mozart Players, and Laurence Osborn's Horn Concerto with Manchester Camerata; he also debuts with Magdeburg Philharmonic (Christian Øland) performing Gavin Higgins' Horn Concerto, and returns to BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Ryan Bancroft).

Recent highlights include the world premiere of Brian Elias' Horn Concerto with BBC Symphony Orchestra (Sakari Oramo) at the Aldeburgh Festival, the Irish premiere of Higgins' Horn Concerto with the Ulster Orchestra (Paweł Kapuła) and performances with Tokyo Philharmonic and Aichi Chamber Orchestra. Other notable debuts include Uppsala Chamber Orchestra (Rebecca Miller) with the Swedish premiere of Huw Watkins' Horn Concerto, as well as performances with Norwegian Radio Orchestra (Jamie Phillips) and London Philharmonic Orchestra (Valentina Peleggi).

Ben has given recitals at major concert halls across Europe, including the Concertgebouw, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Kölner Philharmonie, Musikverein, Pierre Boulez Saal, Southbank Centre, and Wigmore Hall. As a soloist, he has appeared with orchestras such as the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (BBC Proms), Das Sinfonie Orchester Berlin, Die Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Lucerne Symphony, Munich Chamber Orchestra (Klosters Music), Musikkollegium Winterthur, Philharmonie Zuidnederland, Prague Philharmonia, Tapiola Sinfonietta and the Ulster Orchestra.

A committed chamber musician, Ben has collaborated with leading artists including Daniel Barenboim, Martha Argerich, Sergei Babayan, Kirill Gerstein, Denis Kozhukhin, Sunwook Kim, Clara Jumi-Kang, and Allan Clayton at festivals such as Verbier, Salzburg, Jerusalem, Intonations (Berlin),

and Barenboim (Buenos Aires). In recital he has worked with Michael Barenboim, Stephen Hough, Tom Poster, Benjamin Baker, Giuseppe Guarrera and Richard Uttley, and is a member of the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective. In 2025 Ben was Artist-in-Residence at the Barnes Music Festival, appearing in both concerto and chamber music performances. Upcoming highlights include a return to the U.S. with Camerata Pacifica in Santa Barbara and a recital at the Boulez Saal with Alina Ibragimova (violin) and Dénes Várjon (piano), as well as a programme of works for horn and electronics.

His recordings include *Legacy: A Tribute to Dennis Brain* (Three Worlds Records), featuring newly commissioned works by Huw Watkins and Roxanna Panufnik, and a solo concerto album with the Philharmonia Orchestra (conducted by Lee Reynolds), featuring works by Arnold, Schoenberg and Gipps. Ben also recorded the iconic horn call from Wagner's *Siegfried* with the Hallé Orchestra under Sir Mark Elder.

Ben is Principal Horn of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and a Principal Player of Camerata Pacifica. He is also a member of the Boulez Ensemble. He holds a professorship at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp and serves as Artist in Association at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama.

Born in London in 1997, Ben studied at the Royal College of Music Junior Department with Susan Dent, and in 2020 completed his studies with honours at the Barenboim-Said Academy in Berlin with Radek Baborák. He was a prize-winner at the 2019 YCAT International Auditions, a concerto finalist in the 2016 BBC Young Musician Competition, and was nominated by the Barbican as an ECHO Rising Star for the 2021/22 season.



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Jonathan Bloxham

British conductor Jonathan Bloxham was appointed Music Director of the Luzerner Theater in 2023, where he consistently achieves excellent artistic results in a wide range of repertoire. In the 2025/26 season he conducts new productions of *Peter Grimes*, *L'elisir d'amore*, and *Die Zauberflöte*. Jonathan made his Glyndebourne Festival debut in 2021, conducting *Luisa Miller* with the London Philharmonic. In the same year he conducted Glyndebourne Touring Opera's production of *Don Pasquale*, having performed *Rigoletto* with the orchestra in 2019.

This season will be Jonathan's second year as Chief Conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, following in the footsteps of Andris Nelsons and Jonathan Heyward. Last season he led them on two national tours and in their subscription series in Herford, with two further tours planned for this season. In 2021 he recorded a CD of Strauss and Franck with the orchestra, described as "irresistible" by *Musicweb International*.

The 2025/26 season will also mark Jonathan's first as Principal Conductor of the London Mozart Players, building on his long-standing relationship with the ensemble, which he has served as Resident Conductor and Artistic Advisor since 2022. Season highlights include Mozart, Master of Drama, the opening concert at St Martin-in-the-Fields with Danielle De Niese, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a celebratory performance at Fairfield Halls marking the 150th anniversary of the Croydon-born composer. He also leads the orchestra in the world premieres of works by Anna Clyne, Stephen McNeff, Tunde Jegede and Ryan Morgan.

Guest highlights of the past couple of seasons have included London Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie, Tokyo Symphony, Salzburg Mozarteumorchester, Halle Orchestra, BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Belgian National, Residentie Orkest, Tonkuenstlerorchester Wien at the Grafenegg Festival, Bonn Beethovenorchester, Trondheim Symphony and Philharmonic Brass (musicians from Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic orchestras) – many of these on multiple occasions. This season he conducts the Antwerp Symphony

Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Bremer Philharmoniker, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic with two programmes.

In 2024 Jonathan released a recording of Bach's Keyboard Concertos with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Tianqi Du, which reached number one on the Apple Classical Top 100 global chart. He has also recorded works by Bruce Broughton with the London Symphony Orchestra (2024), as well as discs with the BBC Scottish Symphony (2022) and London Mozart Players (2023).

Jonathan's conducting career began in 2016 when he became Assistant Conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. Prior to conducting, he enjoyed a successful career as a cellist, performing across Europe and making his concerto debut at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2012. He studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School, the Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and later trained in conducting with Sian Edwards, Michael Seal, Nicolas Pasquet and Paavo Järvi. For the past sixteen years he has been Artistic Director of the annual Northern Chords Festival in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

London Mozart Players

London Mozart Players are the oldest, freshest and most adventurous chamber orchestra in the UK.

Set up over 75 years ago by Harry Blech to perform the works of Mozart and Haydn, LMP's mission has evolved into creating bold, ambitious and accessible musical experiences for all. LMP are proud to be at the forefront of embedding arts and culture into the life of communities across the UK and beyond, performing both new works and music that stays true to their roots.

LMP work with schools and music hubs around the UK and beyond to inspire the next generation of musicians and music lovers. They're continuing their long tradition of promoting young talent: Nicola Benedetti, Jacqueline du Pré and Yan Pascal Tortelier are just three of many young musical virtuosi championed early in their careers by them.

LMP are based at Fairfield Halls in Croydon and have residencies at St John's, Upper Norwood, Thaxted Festival and Grayshott Concerts. Jonathan Bloxham has served as their Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor since July 2025.

Collaborating with many of the world's greatest soloists and conductors, LMP's work is made in Croydon and celebrated across the globe.

Barry Douglas

Barry Douglas piano

Sponsored by Lady Sieff and Sir Hugh & Lady Stevenson



Field Nocturne No 5 in Bb major
Field Nocturne No 8 in E Minor
Schubert *Impromptu* Op. 142 No. 1
Schubert Fantasy for Piano in C Major
Wanderer Fantasy, D.760

INTERVAL

Prokofiev *Romeo & Juliet* (3 excerpts)
Beethoven Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57
Appassionata

Barry Douglas has established a major international career since winning the Gold Medal at the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, Moscow. As Artistic Director of Camerata Ireland, the only all-Ireland orchestra and the Clondeboyne Festival, he continues to celebrate his Irish heritage whilst also maintaining a busy international touring schedule.

For this afternoon recital Barry is combining works by Schubert, and Prokofiev while celebrating his Irish heritage with two of Field's *Nocturnes*. The recital will culminate in Beethoven's *Appassionata*. Widely regarded as one of his greatest and most technically challenging piano sonatas, the *Appassionata* was considered by Beethoven to be his most tempestuous piano sonata, and remains a cornerstone of the piano repertoire, a popular favourite with audiences.

John Field (1782–1837)

Nocturnes
No. 5 in Bb major
No. 8 in E minor

John Field was born in Dublin to Irish parents, though later in life, as a committed Francophile, he laid claim to a fictitious account of French ancestry. A child prodigy, he was giving public performances by the age of nine, his practice apparently accompanied by frequent beatings. At ten he was apprenticed in London to the virtuoso pianist Muzio Clementi, who combined teaching with international business interests in publishing and piano manufacture and used the young virtuoso to demonstrate his pianos to potential customers. An extended tour in 1801 took them to Paris, Vienna and finally St Petersburg, where Field remained, acting as Clementi's agent and soon establishing himself as the Russian cultural elite's favourite (and most expensive) teacher and performer. For the next twenty years he divided his time between St Petersburg and Moscow, known for a Bohemian lifestyle of slovenly dress, excessive drinking and careless (though often generous) expenditure that did little to diminish his reputation as arguably the most technically polished and expressively poetic pianist of his generation.

Everything Field wrote was for his own use: piano concertos, chamber music, duets and a great many short characteristic pieces. In an essay written 20 years after Field's death, Franz Liszt credited him with opening the way to 'all the productions which have since appeared under the title songs without words, impromptus, ballads etc.... in which feeling and melody reigned alone, liberated from the fetters and encumbrances of a coercive form'. The inspired title *Nocturne*, in particular, first used in a publication of 1812, has assured Field immortality. The Fifth *Nocturne* epitomises what Liszt called Field's 'melodious dreaming', its apparent simplicity of texture and form drawing the listener's attention to every subtle detail of melody and harmony. The E minor nocturne is very different: the tempo is *Adagio*, and the sorrowful melody is angular and drooping, breaking into sighs and sobs. There are echoes of the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight* sonata (in general Field disliked Beethoven's work but that movement would have struck a chord with him). At the end, the piece dissolves into a single aerial line, before falling to earth in a deep-toned cadence.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Schubert's early life gave promise of great things. He trained as a chorister in the imperial court chapel in Vienna, attending the prestigious Imperial and Royal City College. Here the court organist, Wenzel Ruzicka, declared 'he has learnt everything from God, that lad'. The daily rehearsals of the orchestra (which Schubert conducted in Ruzicka's absence) gave him an invaluable practical insight into the music of Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven. Composition lessons came from Mozart's old rival, court composer Antonio Salieri.

However, whether for social, temperamental or artistic reasons, his public career entirely failed to keep pace with his development as a composer. Having reluctantly taken a teacher training course aged 17, he joined the staff at his father's school, but gave up this irksome work after a few years in favour of the insecure life of a freelance musician. He was in his late twenties before his reputation spread much beyond a circle of Viennese admirers, and by then it was too late. Apart from a number of songs and a small amount of piano and chamber music, most of the work for which he is so loved today was bundled together after his premature death at the age of 31 as 'a quantity of old music', valued at 10 florins (less than £100 at today's values).

Impromptu Op. 142 No. 1 in F minor

In spite of his deteriorating health, the last two years of Schubert's sadly short life were unbelievably productive. As well as putting the finishing touches to the 'Great' C major symphony, he composed some of his finest songs and chamber music, sketched a new opera and capped his output for piano with three great sonatas and two sets of *Impromptus*, Op. 90 and Op. 142. Publishers were at last taking more interest in Schubert's work, and in 1828 Tobias Haslinger undertook to publish some of his latest short piano pieces, choosing, with the composer's agreement, the title *Impromptu*, with its appealing (and partly misleading) suggestion of informal spontaneity. In the event, only the first two of Op. 90 were published in Schubert's lifetime; the four pieces comprising Op. 142 did not appear until 1839.

Robert Schumann, excited by every new revelation about Schubert's achievements, wrote an enthusiastic review in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Keen to credit Schubert with a place in the great classical tradition, he questioned the title 'Impromptu', writing that op. 142 no. 1 "is obviously the first movement of a sonata; it is so thoroughly developed and rounded out." Elsewhere, Schumann drew attention to Schubert's unique character, reflected in the "psychologically unusual... course and connection" of his musical ideas.

In this Impromptu Schubert illustrates both his individuality and his debt to tradition. It is certainly highly structured, but it refuses to be pigeonholed. It opens with a challenging gesture that might well provide the material for a dramatic sonata movement, but is only heard again to signpost the halfway point and the end. It is succeeded by a substantial section, based around the 'relative major' key (A flat), that generates three varied themes from the same basic idea. The music drifts into an unexpectedly drawn-out cadence and then into an even longer section in which flowing arpeggios accompany a question-and-answer conversation between treble and bass. Schubert marks the section *appassionato* but the mood is musing and introspective; there are emotionally charged switches between major and minor tonality, but the dynamic level rarely rises above *piano*. After the return of the opening, the music runs its whole course again, modified (in accordance with 'sonata' principles) so that it remains in the home key of F.

Wanderer Fantasy Op.15
Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo –
Adagio – Presto – Allegro

It was in the songs of his late teenage years that Schubert first found his most personal style, leading the partnership of voice and piano down new expressive paths in an almost unbelievable torrent of industry; 1815 alone, his nineteenth year, saw the creation of almost 150 songs, including such masterpieces as *Erlkönig*. The source of this Fantasy, his setting of G P Schmidt von Lübeck's *Der Wanderer*, dates from the following year.

In the same period, Schubert also poured out a stream of orchestral, piano and chamber works that were full of charm, but much more indebted to his Viennese predecessors. The *Wanderer Fantasy*, written in November 1822 just a month after the two movements of the *Unfinished Symphony*, stands out as an original and novel masterpiece. In the slightly earlier, and much less serious, 'Trout' Quintet, Schubert had devoted one movement to variations on a song. In the Fantasy, the song provides a motto that pervades the entire work, and the sections are run together in a continuous whole. Beethoven, Schubert's hero, had led the way in his so-called 'Moonlight' Sonata, where he instructs the player not to break between movements; Schubert would not have failed to notice that sonata's subtitle – *Sonata quasi una fantasia*.

The *Wanderer Fantasy* opens with a theme of three contrasting components – a driving long-short-short rhythm, a sky-rocket arpeggio and an abrupt figure in rising semitones. In due course this theme gives way, after the custom of a sonata first movement,

to a gentler melody (in the unexpected key of E major, but still based on the same rhythmic pattern) and then to a spectacularly powerful development. A lyrical, fresh-sounding melody (actually distilled from the E major melody) appears over a rippling accompaniment, before further dramatic development of the opening idea and a long, slow descent to the remote key of C sharp minor – the key of the original song 'Der Wanderer'.

For the Adagio section, Schubert uses only eight bars of the song (bars that include the words 'everywhere, I am a stranger') simplified in outline and thickened in texture into an austere chorale. Variations on this theme drift from key to key, surrounded by increasingly elaborate accompaniments and culminating in a filigree of cascading scales, a massive chordal outburst and another long transition into the Scherzo. Here all the elements of the work's opening are transformed into vigorous dancing figures, and Schubert even allows himself to relax briefly into a charming waltz. The tuneful middle section of the movement is yet another transformation – this time from a later episode in the first Allegro. Schubert was no academic, but he crowns the Fantasy with a fugue – not a piece of dry counterpoint but an explosively pianistic piece of writing that emerges from a massive build-up and presents its jagged subject (yet another derivative of the work's opening) in sonorous octaves. Flying arpeggios and massive chordal sequences join the fugal theme, to drive the work to its forceful conclusion.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1963)
Ten pieces from Romeo and Juliet
No. 6 Montagues and Capulets
No. 7 Friar Laurence
No. 8 Mercutio

In the years before World War I, Prokofiev made a name for himself as an *enfant terrible* with his solo piano pieces and first two piano concertos. In the wake of the Russian revolution, together with many other artists, he left Russia, moving to the USA in 1918 and then to Paris in 1922. During fourteen years based in France, he maintained his contact with Russia, and eventually the pull of his homeland proved decisive; in 1936 he returned permanently to the precarious life of an artist in Stalin's Soviet Union. By then his style had already mellowed; he had rejected the 'contrivances and complexities' of twentieth-century music in favour of what he called a 'new simplicity'. The works of his Soviet period include patriotic odes, film scores, the opera *War and Peace* and accessible works such as *Peter and the Wolf* and *Lieutenant Kije*, in spite of which he still found himself denounced in 1948, alongside Shostakovich and others, under the

notorious 'Zhdanov Doctrine' that required all music to serve the purposes of the socialist state.

The proposal for a full-length score based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* had already arrived from the Kirov Ballet in Leningrad in 1934, when Prokofiev was still based in Paris. The progress of the work was fraught with problems, and the first production, of a shortened version, took place in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1938. Meanwhile Prokofiev had drawn from the score two orchestral suites and a set of ten piano pieces, which quickly gained popularity and whetted appetites for a complete staging. Eventually, the premiere was given by the Kirov Ballet in 1940, with enough success to earn the Stalin Prize. In Moscow later that year, a production by the Bolshoi Ballet (who had previously declared the music 'undanceable') gave the final seal of approval to the staged version.

These three movements from Prokofiev's piano arrangement open with 'Montagues and Capulets' – the macho swagger of the Knights' Dance, now indelibly associated with *The Apprentice*, interspersed with the delicate phrases of Juliet's theme. The even-paced portrait of Friar Laurence, as he tries to guide Romeo through his emotional turmoil, is followed by a picture of Mercutio as high-spirited raconteur, joker and tease.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57 Appassionata
1 Allegro assai
2 Andante con moto
3 Allegro ma non troppo – Presto

Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas, a 'Bible' for all aspiring pianists, chart his career in Vienna from young lion of the salons, through the 'heroic' period of his middle years, fraught with the irreconcilable issues of broadening artistic horizons, greater celebrity, increasing deafness and hopeless loves, to his final period, when – amidst a disorderly and problematic personal life – his music moved even further into previously uncharted territory.

Arriving in Vienna from his home town of Bonn in 1792, there were obvious practical reasons for Beethoven to write for the piano. He initially made his reputation as the brilliant and unorthodox performer and improviser of his own music in the drawing-rooms of wealthy patrons (solo piano recitals were still a thing of the future). He needed teaching material for his students (often aristocratic young women with whom he was liable to fall in love). Publishers favoured piano music, which required less engraving than multi-instrumental works, and found a good market among competent amateurs.

In spite of advances in piano manufacture, Beethoven was dissatisfied with the instrument throughout his life. In 1826, after the astonishing effects in his late sonatas (which he could only have heard in imagination) he remarked that the piano 'is, and remains an inadequate instrument'. Twenty years earlier, he had complained that 'my piano music always makes the poorest impression on me', adding, understandably enough, 'especially when badly played'. And prior to that, he had said, perhaps unfairly, 'The whole tribe of pianoforte manufacturers has been swarming around me in their anxiety to serve me – and all for nothing.' Although his demands on the instrument were constantly ahead of their actual capabilities, during his lifetime pianos did become more sturdily built and more powerful in tone; pedal mechanisms were improved, and the range increased. In 1803 he was presented with a new Érard instrument, with a robust, up-to-date English action, which perhaps inspired him to write the great, contrasting pair of sonatas of his middle years – the brilliant *Waldstein* and the dramatic *Appassionata*.

The subtitle was the publisher's, not Beethoven's, but (unlike the *Moonlight*) doesn't mislead. The whole sonata expresses dark and powerful feelings, with an unprecedented violence of contrasting textures, dynamics and tonalities. The ominous opening figure descends in the first bar to the lowest note of the new Érard, rises to the surface and tails off in a little trill, before repeating the opening on G flat – close in pitch (just a semitone) but harmonically dislocated from the original F minor. A four-note rhythm, similar to the famous opening of the Fifth Symphony, rubs in the semitone interval. A transformation of the opening in the major key promises a brighter mood, but is soon displaced by an grim theme in continuous, aggressive semiquavers. The principal theme is the basis of a stormy development in new areas of harmony, and when it returns in its original form the storm rumbles on in the bass. In the coda, we can imagine the power of Beethoven's improvisations in the switchback of cascading arpeggios, contrasts of speed and dynamics, snatches of thematic development and pounding chords. Finally, everything dies down to 'ppp' and fades into the silence from which the opening chords of the Andante will emerge.

The theme of the Andante is barely more than a series of weighty chords, animated by a couple of trailing comments from the bass line. The simple melodic contour, almost stationary at first, anticipates the rising arpeggio of the last movement, and three variations gradually increase the rhythmic flow with little change to the austere mood. The solemnity of the opening returns, but is not allowed to come to rest: the final cadence is interrupted by a mysterious

spread chord, repeated *fortissimo* as a dissonant scream that galvanises the Allegro into action.

Beethoven's friend and pupil Ferdinand Ries witnessed the gestation of this Allegro, on a long walk in the country. Beethoven had been 'all the time humming and sometimes howling, always up and down, without singing any definite notes'. Arriving home, he 'ran to the piano without taking off his hat' and improvised for an hour, unaware of anyone else in the room. As in the work's opening bars, this finale is based uncompromisingly on the chord of F minor, and the same semitone dislocation is built into the theme, which sweeps everything before it in an angry current. In the second part of the movement, the torrent of notes is interrupted by the dissonant chord that had heralded it, now spread across the instrument in arpeggios that gradually slow and fade out in the depths of the piano. Beethoven marks a repeat that in due course takes us again through this extraordinary episode. The great commentator Donald Tovey found the effect 'as impossible to go through twice as the death of a hero', whilst acknowledging the extra force that the repeat lends to the coda of the work, with its new, hectic Presto theme and furious closing bars.

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Barry Douglas

Barry Douglas has established a major international career since winning the Gold Medal at the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, Moscow. As Artistic Director of Camerata Ireland, the only all-Ireland orchestra and the Clondeboy Festival, he continues to celebrate his Irish heritage whilst also maintaining a busy international touring schedule.

In recent seasons, Barry has performed with orchestras including the London Symphony, Estonian National Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lille, Nuremberg Symphony and Staatskapelle Halle, among others.

Barry marked the 30th anniversary of his Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition win with full Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto cycles with the National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin and the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast. Also noted for his promotion of contemporary repertoire, he performed the premiere of Kevin Volans' Fourth Piano Concerto with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the European premiere of the Penderecki Piano Concerto.

A highly sought-after recitalist and chamber musician, he has given performances across the globe from The Royal Albert Hall, Barbican and Wigmore Hall and the Verbier Festival to the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, Grand Theatre in Shanghai and other cities in China.

He has previously appeared with the BBC Scottish Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Seattle Symphony, Melbourne and Sydney Symphonies, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Moscow State Symphony, Russian National, Vancouver and Colorado Symphonies, the Halle Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic orchestras and many more.

Barry is an exclusive Chandos recording artist. He recently completed a six-album recording of the full works for solo piano of Brahms. International Record Review wrote that "this is indeed Brahms playing of the utmost integrity and authority... this cycle looks set to become a benchmark version." His current recording projects focus on the solo piano works of Schubert and Tchaikovsky. Also with Chandos, Barry is exploring Irish folk music through his own arrangements, working with ancient melodies through to pieces by contemporary song writers. In 1999 Barry founded the chamber orchestra Camerata Ireland to celebrate and nurture the very best of young musicians from both Northern and the Republic of Ireland. In addition to striving for musical excellence, one of the orchestra's aims is to further the peace process in Ireland by promoting dialogue and collaboration through its musical education programmes. Barry regularly tours with Camerata Ireland throughout the world. Highlights of past seasons were Camerata Ireland's debut at the BBC Proms in London, and a world premiere of a new cantata commissioned by The Honourable The Irish Society, *At Sixes and Sevens*, alongside the London Symphony Orchestra to celebrate Derry-Londonderry becoming City of Culture 2013. In January 2021 Barry was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to music and community relations in the 2021 New Year Honours List. He previously received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2002 New Year's Honours List for services to music.

Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra

Jonathan Swensen 'cello • Ben Copeman conductor (*A Quiet Smile From Far Away*)
Jonathan Burnett conductor (*Elgar Concerto & Sibelius Symphony No. 1*)

Sponsored by The Headley Trust



Amit Manna *A Quiet Smile From Far Away*
Elgar Cello Concerto
INTERVAL
Sibelius Symphony No. 1

In its 40 year history, Berkshire Music Trust has proudly supported children and young people to develop their passion for music. The Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra is formed of some of the most talented and dedicated young musicians in Berkshire. Making their Festival debut, their musical director Jonathan Burnett and assistant musical director Ben Copeman were keen to showcase the orchestra through well-loved classics, and a new commission by emerging composer Amit Manna.

Rising star cellist Jonathan Swensen won the Windsor International String Competition in 2019 and has gone on to an international career. Performing one of Britain's most well-loved pieces, Elgar's Cello Concerto, this partnership will undoubtedly bring new energy to a modern-day classic.

Amit Manna (2005–)
A Quiet Smile from Far Away

Amit Manna is a composer and youth leader based in Manchester who divides his energies between studying at the Royal Northern College of Music and chairing the Berks & Bucks Football Association Youth Network – in both contexts leading himself and others on the road to self-discovery and self-development. As well as *A Quiet Smile From Far Away*, receiving its premiere this evening, his recent commissions include *I Am Safe*, for soprano Sophia Brown, and *Dancing Like No One's Watching* for Michelle Phillips and the 'Music and Parkinson's' research project.

Amit writes: *'I think of Newbury as the place where I first 'became' myself. It's where I went to school, where I met some of my closest friends, and where I started my musical journey with Berkshire Maestros (now Berkshire Music Trust). Returning to the Newbury Spring Festival to work with an organisation that shaped me feels like a 'homecoming' of sorts, mostly because it reminded me that we are all, in some way, a collection of the people who have crossed our paths.'*

'We carry those people with us in everything we do, but I didn't realise how vividly they stayed there until a few months ago when I saw a photo of an old friend on Instagram. We don't speak anymore – our lives went in different directions – but seeing them thriving hit me with a rush of what I call "second-hand pride". It was a strange, unexplainable mix where I was genuinely happy for them, a little sad because of the distance between us, and deeply grateful for having known them at all.'

'I wanted A Quiet Smile From Far Away to capture the way those feelings don't actually cancel each other out. The pride doesn't erase the distance, and the gratitude doesn't mean I stop missing them. They simply coexist, held in that same moment, each as powerful as the others.'

'Because of that, this piece eventually turned into a kind of thank-you note. It's for the people who shaped us before slipping away; the friends who loved us when we didn't yet know how to love ourselves; the ones who believed in who we could be and then gave us the space to become it. It's a reminder that even when someone slips from our story, they leave traces in all the pages that follow.'

This intense personal experience of memory, combining the ache of separation with the warmth of gratitude, is expressed in *A Quiet Smile From Far Away* through the gradual development and intensification of a repeated progression of slow-

moving harmonies. These are clothed in a wide variety of instrumental colours and textures, and accompanied by 'breakaway' material – solo passages or figures that stand out from the other instruments and 'represent distinct emotional responses to the memory'. The score is annotated with the detailed stages of Amit's own journey, but his aim is to allow listeners to bring their own associations, rather than prescribing how they feel. Slow and veiled to start with, the music very gradually increases speed, arriving at 'the memory fully complete and alive' in an anthemic passage dominated by the brass. The complex, conflicting emotions that follow are expressed in more turbulent music, before being recognised as 'parallel truths'. The work ends with the original memory, now viewed with distance and clarity. Where practical, Amit proposes that the closing section 'may be performed without a conductor, relying on close listening and shared breathing between players.'

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
Cello Concerto in E minor

- 1 Adagio – moderato
- 2 Lento – Allegro molto
- 3 Adagio
- 4 Allegro, ma non troppo – Piu lento

'I do not feel drawn to write peace music,' wrote Elgar after the end of the First World War. *'The whole atmosphere is too full of complexities...'* The work he did write was the Cello Concerto. The theme of the first movement was already sketched in a letter of March 1918, though with no hint of what work it might belong to. By July 1919 he was playing passages to his friends and the work was completed in August. The first performance in October the same year was disastrous, on account of shortage of rehearsal time. Since then, of course, the concerto has achieved iconic status: as Elgar's farewell to everything that had belonged to the pre-war world; as his last major work, and arguably his greatest; as perhaps the finest cello concerto of all; and as the best-loved performance by the unsurpassed Jacqueline du Pré.

Perhaps only a conservative English composer could have written such a work. The expressive, chromatic language that Elgar inherited from Wagner and his school (in the absence of any native British tradition) was no longer current on the continent – having been superseded by the modernist advances towards atonality of the pre-war years. The post-war music of Germany and France avoided emotional and reflective styles, looking instead to a neo-classicism based on eighteenth-century models or to the wit and energy of popular culture. At a moment when writing honestly, accessibly and

emotionally could not have been harder, Elgar finds a medium in which the cello can speak for a generation. At the same time he incorporates all the virtuosity expected of a concerto soloist and solves with consummate skill the problems of balance for which the cello concerto as a medium is notorious.

The frequent recitative-like cadenzas are a daring and crucial feature of the work, in which we seem to hear the soloist thinking aloud. At the start, the cello's initially resolute gesture becomes caught up in reflection, shared first by the woodwind and then by the strings (a single chord suffices), and then passes seamlessly into the violas' first gentle statement of the main melody. This melody proves susceptible to many different moods, from nostalgia to heroism; it is a feature of the whole work that the most striking contrasts are not so much between themes, as between the ways in which a single theme is presented. A more optimistic and rhythmic melody, introduced by woodwinds, provides the middle section of this ternary form movement, which ends in gloom as timpani add a sinister undertone to the main theme. The cello now introduces a pizzicato version of the opening recitative and toys with an idea for a new theme. At length, the orchestra takes up the idea and the soloist sets off on a moto perpetuo of shadowy brilliance – its complex mood an amalgam of the utmost rhythmic energy, hushed dynamics and constantly shifting harmonies and instrumental colours. By keeping his forms simple and the movements comparatively short, Elgar builds up the impact of the work as a whole.

The Adagio, a profound lament, is built around a few particularly telling phrases. If it feels inconclusive, the explanation is provided during the last movement, which starts with the orchestra inviting the soloist to play with a spirited new theme. Again, a solo recitative intervenes, as the cello pensively leads back to the start of the whole concerto; however, in a sweeping upward arpeggio, the rumbustious new idea is accepted – for the time being. But we are not much more than halfway through the movement when the good cheer evaporates and the soloist slows down (*Più lento*) to embark on a long and gradually intensifying expression of searing regret, culminating in the return of the most yearning phrase from the third movement. A few brisk bars conclude the movement, but it is the flavour of this *Più lento* that lingers.

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

- Symphony No. 1 in E minor Op. 39
- 1 Andante ma non troppo – Allegro energico
 - 2 Andante (ma non troppo lento)
 - 3 Scherzo: Allegro – Lento (ma non troppo) – Tempo 1
 - 4 Finale (Quasi una Fantasia): Andante – Allegro molto – Andante assai – Allegro molto – Andante

In the late nineteenth century, Finland had been under the thumb of foreign rulers since the Middle Ages. Swedish was the official language, Russia the political master. However the Finnish people had never lost their devotion to their language and its ancient literature and mythology, or to the unique natural landscapes of their country. Jean Sibelius was educated at the first Finnish-speaking grammar school, and studied at Helsinki university (abandoning law for music) before embarking on extensive studies in Berlin and Vienna. Returning to Finland in 1891, he shot to prominence as the musical representative of Finnish nationalism in works such as the choral symphony *Kullervo*, the 'Lemminkäinen' Suite (including the famous *Swan of Tuonela*) and *Finlandia* (1899). In 1892 he married Aino Järnefelt, daughter of General Alexander Järnefelt, an influential nationalist and advocate of the Finnish language; the couple built a villa at Jävenpää, among the forests and lakes not far from Helsinki, where Sibelius was to spend the rest of his life.

Through the 1890s, Sibelius was developing his musical interests on two fronts. On one hand he was writing deliberately nationalist music and studying the melodic formulae ('rune melodies') to which the stories of the Kalevala were recited. Discussing these in a lecture of 1896, he pointed to the typical 'pentachord' (comprising the first five notes of the minor scale) on which they were based, and to their changeable, improvisatory character. They should not, he said, be forced into conventional forms and harmonisations. On the other hand, he was keen to find an audience beyond his homeland. It was his study and experience of mainstream classical music in Vienna, Berlin and other European centres that had galvanized his efforts at composition; to succeed in the concert halls of Europe he would need to engage with listeners familiar with the symphonies of Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák and Tchaikovsky. His first symphony, completed in 1899, was a major step towards writing works that could claim a place both in the national and the international repertoire.

How a listener responds to Sibelius depends on where they come from. Gustav Mahler, who evidently thought of the Austrian-German tradition as universal rather than national, dismissed an early work by Sibelius as *'just ordinary Kitsch, spiced with*

certain 'Nordic' orchestral touches like a kind of national sauce', adding scornfully, 'They are the same everywhere, these national geniuses.' Sibelius was to prove him wrong, by integrating highly individual 'Nordic touches' as essential ingredients in his music.

In the first symphony, completed in 1899, the integration is still a work in progress. To a Finnish sympathiser, the rolling timpani, majestic brass choruses and solo woodwinds of the symphony would recall Sibelius' already famous and angrily patriotic *Finlandia*, whilst his melodic turns of phrase would resonate with their familiarity with Finnish folk music. A contemporary Russian listener might have been more aware of influences from their own national composers – Borodin's harmonic fingerprints, or Tchaikovsky's emotionally drooping melodic sequences – whilst to a British listener, it might all sound very foreign indeed.

Classical symphonies had often started with slow introductions, creating a serious and attentive atmosphere before the main action began. Sibelius reinvents this practice in his own terms, opening with a long solo for solitary clarinet, over a timpani roll that fades away to leave the solo instrument disappearing into the surrounding silence. The impulsive Allegro sweeps in with splendid force; a second group of ideas, dominated by woodwinds, solo and in pairs, leads to a more peaceful interpretation of the opening theme over murmuring string accompaniment. An accelerando winds the music up towards the central development section, with its snapshots of menacing brass and gentler violin and woodwind solos. A mysterious tissue of overlapping phrases – falling in the woodwind, rising in the basses – surrounds the return of the opening melody.

The second movement opens in a less individual manner, with a Tchaikovskian melody for violins and cellos in octaves. Less expected are the contrapuntal section led by a solo bassoon and the quickly changing moods that transform the character of the opening melody. Even more surprising is the violent build-up that culminates in a dramatic picture of heroic brass battling against the storm-force winds of the strings, before subsiding to a final, sighing return of the expressive opening melody.

Thrumming pizzicato chords and a rhythm hammered out by timpani announce the muscular Scherzo, a folk dance of whirling figures and stamping feet. The slower middle section plays with extreme orchestral colours – a brass chorale paired with a single flute, a clarinet trill tapering to nothing, a string chord repeated in an immense crescendo, a harp glissando, pianissimo bass drum rolls almost out of earshot.

Later, while working on the Fifth Symphony, Sibelius wrote 'I wonder whether this name, 'symphony', has done more harm than good to my symphonies. I'm really planning to let my inner being – my fantasy – speak.' It was a thought already acknowledged in the finale of his first symphony, with its subtitle 'quasi una fantasia', although the actual movement in some ways shows less of Sibelius' imagination than the three that precede it. It opens with a grandiose statement of the clarinet's melody from the start of the symphony, and continues, captivatingly though with less originality, by pairing a vigorous, syncopated first theme with a romantically indulgent Slavic second melody.

Early performances of the symphony successfully spread Sibelius' name across Europe. When it reached Liverpool in 1905, the critic of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote, 'I have never listened to any music that took me away so completely from our usual Western life and it transported me into a quite new civilisation. Every page of it breathes of another manner of thought, another way of living, even another landscape and seascape than ours.' The critic of the *Hamburger Nachrichten* was even more carried away, writing that the symphony, 'full of unrestrained strength, full of passionate vivacity and astonishing audacity is ... a remarkable work, one that steps out on new paths, or rather rushes forward like an intoxicated god.'

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Jonathan Swensen

Rising star of the cello Jonathan Swensen is the recipient of the 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant and was recently awarded joint First Prize at the 2024 Naumburg International Cello Competition. Previously he has been featured as both Musical America's 'New Artist of the Month' and 'One to Watch' in Gramophone Magazine. Jonathan first fell in love with the cello upon hearing the Elgar Concerto at the age of six, and ultimately made his concerto debut performing that very piece with Portugal's Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música.

The release of Jonathan's debut recording *Fantasia*, on Champs Hill Records, an album of works for solo cello, including Bent Sørensen's *Farewell Fantasia*, composed for and dedicated to Jonathan and which he premiered in 2021. The album received rave reviews on its release, including from Gramophone, BBC Music, The Strad and Musical America which printed "Swensen proves to be not just a bold programmer, but a mature artist with a bold rounded sound and the emotional chops to back it up."

Solo appearances with orchestras have included the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra under Douglas Boyd, the New England Conservatory Philharmonia and Hugh Wolff, London's Philharmonia Orchestra, Orquesta Ciudad de Granada, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Odense Symphony Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, the NFM Leopoldinum in a play-direct program, Mobile Symphony, and the Greenville Symphony. During the 2024-25 season Jonathan made his debut with the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, returns to the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra

He has made critically acclaimed recital debuts at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater and New York's Merkin Concert Hall, with additional performances in Boston's Jordan Hall, the Morgan Library and Museum, the Casals Festival and the Krannert Center. In addition to his many solo appearances, Jonathan is a frequent performer of chamber music in the U.S. and Europe, appearing at the Tivoli Festival, Copenhagen Summer Festival, Chamberfest Cleveland, Krzyżowa-Music, Vancouver Recital Society, San Francisco Performances, La Jolla Music Society's Summerfest, and Newport Classical.

In 2024 Jonathan joined the Bowers Program of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center where he performed at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center's Rose Studio, and on tour throughout the United States. He captured First Prizes at the 2019 Windsor International String Competition, 2018 Khachaturian International Cello Competition, and the 2018 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. A graduate of the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Jonathan continued his studies with Torleif Thedéen at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, and Laurence Lesser at the New England Conservatory, where he received his Artist Diploma in May 2023. Jonathan is an Artist in Residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Belgium working with Gary Hoffman.

Sunday 10 May • 7.00pm
St Nicolas Church, West Mills
RG14 5HG



Jonathan Burnett

Jonathan Burnett started his musical studies at the age of seven. He obtained a BA degree in violin performance from the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. After completing his first degree, he won two major scholarships to continue to study with Prof. Dona Lee Croft. As a performer Jonathan has been a member of some of the most prestigious orchestras in the UK such as the BBC Welsh Orchestra and Welsh National Orchestra. Jonathan has a passion for contemporary music, and he has played with many chamber ensembles who pioneer new music.

Jonathan's teaching career started in Wales while studying for his first degree. After contributing to the development of music departments in various institutions, he became Head of Strings at Berkshire Music Trust where he has been working since 1999. He is not only an accomplished performer, but also a dedicated conductor and is in charge of different ensembles as well as the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Jonathan's teaching and performing expertise has allowed him to work around the world delivering tuition. Jonathan has recently been appointed to the board of trustees of the Dorothy Croft Trust, a trust set up to enable talented students in financial need to access lessons, Masterclasses and related travel costs.



Benjamin Copeman

Benjamin studied flute at Trinity Laban with Margaret Campbell (Royal Opera House), Anna Noakes and Wissam Boustany (Chamber Orchestra of Europe) graduating as a Bachelor of Music and latterly awarded a Post Graduate Diploma.

His formative orchestral direction experience includes working with the National Youth Wind Symphony Orchestra, The London Soundpainting Orchestra, Haslemere Symphony Orchestra and the Berkshire Youth Music Trust Wind Orchestra. As an orchestral flautist Benjamin has enjoyed a varied freelance career with highlights including performances at Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Opera and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

Benjamin has premiered and recorded music for flute by contemporary composers Daniel Gillingwater, Joshua Spear, Florence Maunders and Simon Bennison.

Benjamin was appointed as a teacher to Berkshire Music Trust in 2014 and has worked with all ensembles, from entry level to his recent position of assistant director of the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra.



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Wednesday 13th May
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 The Corn Exchange, RG14 5BD



Wednesday 13th May
Foyle-Štšura Duo
 7:30pm
 Englefield House, RG7 5EN



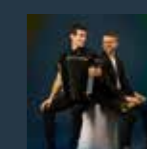
Friday 15th May
Ensemble Renard
 12:30pm
 The Corn Exchange, RG14 5BD



Monday 18th May
Ensemble Augelletti
 7:30pm
 St Mary's Church, RG17 9TR



Thursday 21st May
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 7:30pm
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Florian Störtz

Florian Störtz bass baritone • Mark Rogers piano

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Young Artists Recital 1

Strauss	Im Sonnenschein Op. 87 No. 4
Liszt	S'il est un charmant gazon, S. 284
Liszt	Der du von dem Himmel bist (first version) S. 279/1
Liszt	Oh quand je dors S.282
Müller-Hermann	Wie eine Vollmondnacht Op. 20 No. 4
Wagner	Wesendonck Lieder
Müller-Hermann	Wandle wie im Traum
Müller-Hermann	Der letzte Abend
Strauss	Befreit No. 4 Op. 39
Liszt	Der du von dem Himmel bist (third version) S.279/3

Florian Störtz, one of the most exciting young baritones of his generation, and Mark Rogers met during their student days at the Royal Academy of Music in London and found congenial musical partners in each other from the get-go. Their specialty is the close-knitted musicianship and refreshing interpretative drive that have earned them recognition in the world of song. Together, they have won the 2023 Helmut Deutsch Song Competition with an electric performance of songs by Schubert, Wolf and Mahler. Shortly afterwards, they won the Prix de mélodie at the 2023 Nadia et Lili Boulanger International Song Competition in Paris.

Their programme today centres around Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, one of the pinnacles of Romantic song writing. Alongside this, we hear songs by Franz Liszt, Johanna Müller-Hermann and Richard Strauss, all composers with strong connections to Wagner.

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)
Im Sonnenschein Op. 87 No. 4

Richard Strauss' public composing career was centred at first on orchestral music, particularly the series of tone poems of the 1880s and 1890s. He was in his mid-thirties before he turned decisively to the stage, in the series of operas he composed over the next four decades. However, he was already pouring out songs; the first at the age of six, and over 100 by the time of his first opera. Strauss approached song-writing through music rather than text, and described having musical ideas waiting to find suitable lyrics. With their long melodic lines and fluid harmonies, the songs illustrate the love affair with the human voice so evident in his operas, and are given colourful (but not overpowering) accompaniments, a number of which he later orchestrated. *Im Sonnenschein* is a late work, from 1935. It opens with grandly expansive gestures, rising to rhetorical splendour before turning an emotional corner at *Zurück ich blick (I look back)* and ending nostalgically, with the 'sunshine' motif in the piano now a flickering memory.

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
S'il est un charmant gazon, S. 284 (second version)
Der du von dem Himmel bist (first version) S. 279/1
Oh quand je dors S.282 (second version)

Franz Liszt's long and multi-faceted career is perhaps the most phenomenal in nineteenth-century music: in his youth an international sensation as a virtuoso pianist and composer, scandalously involved with a married aristocrat; in middle age a renowned teacher, writer of orchestral and choral music and creator of the symphonic poem; in old age the Abbé Liszt, in minor orders in the Catholic church and still pushing the boundaries in piano pieces that anticipated the modernists of the next century. Together with Wagner he promoted the 'New German' style of romanticism – and there were personal as well as artistic links, as his daughter Cosima became Wagner's second wife.

The poems Liszt set in his 70-odd songs are as cosmopolitan as his life, with lyrics in French, German, Italian, Hungarian and English. Many were written during his early years of concert touring, and revised later – the revisions typically simplifying the piano part and adjusting the balance in favour of the singer. This second version of *S'il est un charmant gazon* is set as a French *mélodie*, tuneful and delightfully relaxed over its rippling accompaniment.

Liszt created four versions of Goethe's *Der du von dem Himmel bist*. The first, from 1842, opens with a piano introduction of oscillating figures both in the melody and bass, and continues in an expressive nocturne style. With the mention of pain and joy the music becomes more agitated. The thought of sweet peace

brings a moment of reflection, before an impassioned, imploring outburst.

Both Liszt's versions of *Oh quand je dors* open with a dreamy phrase in the high register of the piano. In 1842 he had strained for effect later in the song; now the accompaniment remains a delicate and expressive frame to the emotional visions of the singer.

Johanna Müller-Hermann (1868–1941)
Wie eine Vollmondnacht Op. 20 No. 4

Johanna Müller-Hermann was the daughter of a senior civil servant in the Austrian Ministry of Culture and Education in Vienna. She had the cultured upbringing typical of the time, but a career as a musician was unthinkable to a woman of her class, and she followed her father's wishes in training as a teacher. Marriage in 1893 to Otto Martini-Müller freed her to follow her interests privately, and she studied with some of the leading musicians in Vienna. In 1918 Müller-Hermann followed her teacher Josef Foerster as professor of composition at the New Vienna Conservatoire, teaching there until it was closed down by the Nazis in 1932. Her work – which included substantial orchestral, choral and chamber works as well as several volumes of songs – was performed and published from the late 1890s until the 1950s, before suffering half a century of neglect.

Wie ein Vollmondnacht, is an impressionistic evocation of intimate and ecstatic feelings. A sinuous vocal line rides over rich, mysteriously shifting harmonies, growing in excitement towards the final cry of 'O Glück!' ('O bliss').

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)
Wesendonck Lieder
1 *Der Engel (The Angel)*
2 *Stehe still! (Stand still!)*
3 *Im Treibhaus (In the Greenhouse)*
4 *Schmerzen (Agonies)*
5 *Träume (Dreams)*

Richard Wagner's life's work was the creation of a new type of music drama, an ambition he pursued relentlessly: as well as composing, he wrote his own libretti and created the theatre at Bayreuth to have his work staged. He was frequently on the move, not only for employment but also to escape creditors and – after his involvement in the 1849 uprising in Dresden – to avoid the police, whose warrant for his arrest might have ended in execution. Taking refuge in Switzerland in the early 1850s, he met two admirers of his music, Otto Wesendonck, a wealthy merchant, and his wife Mathilde, who supported him financially and offered Wagner and his wife Minna a house on their estate.

While working on *The Ring of the Nibelung* Wagner had already been considering the story of Tristan and Isolde as 'a monument to that most beautiful of dreams, in which the true happiness of love shall for once, be utterly fulfilled'. Over the next two years his relationship with Mathilde developed into an intense and creatively inspiring intimacy. On 9 August 1857, he stopped work on *The Ring* in mid-stream; two weeks later he was immersed in writing the libretto for *Tristan und Isolde*. Mathilde, too, was inspired, writing poems that Wagner set to music. The actual extent of their *affaire* is uncertain, but it was serious enough; Minna Wagner intercepted one of his letters, and everything blew up. Minna made for Dresden, the Wesendoncks went travelling and Wagner moved to Venice, where he completed *Tristan*.

In *Der Engel*, the 'shining wings' are depicted in the wafting accompanying motif, whilst the vocal line follows every twist of meaning, soaring with the Angel and darkening at the thought of earth's sorrows. *Stehe Still!* finds the soloist in Brünnhilde mode, painting the 'rushing wheel of time' in leaping phrases. The order to be still is obeyed, and the music quietsens to a moment of rapture when 'eye gazes blissfully into eye'.

Im Treibhaus, the last of the five songs to be written, is subtitled *Study for Tristan und Isolde*, and starts with music from Act III of the opera. The heavy, sighing phrases underline the gloomy picture that links the singer and the exotic greenhouse plants, sharing the same sense of suffering and alienation. In *Schmerzen* it is the sun itself that suffers and dies every day. The idea, reflecting the dark philosophy of Schopenhauer, that 'only death gives birth to life', is presented in dramatic gestures.

Träume, in which joys appear as visions that eventually fade away, is another *Tristan* study. Gently pulsing chords in the extended introduction and postlude create a dream-like atmosphere, framing a vocal line that flows seamlessly through the stanzas of the text.

Johanna Müller-Hermann
Wandle wie im Traum Op. 4 No. 3
Der letzte Abend Op. 2 No. 4

Wandle wie im Traum is a brief song with a simple three-part shape, matching the structure of the poem. Oscillating chords at the start create a dreamy uncertainty, and after the voice spins its final question out in a long phrase, the piano tails off inconclusively without completing its final cadence.

The poet of *Der letzte Abend*, Ricarda Huch, was described by Thomas Mann as the 'first lady of German letters'. The poem is a monologue set on an unspecified 'last evening', with imagery that ranges from mundane detail to a desperate fear of abandonment. Müller-Hermann's setting follows the nuances of the poem in a freely evolving arioso, rising to a final outburst of emotion.

Richard Strauss
Befreit Op. 39 No. 4

Befreit was written in 1898, almost 40 years earlier than *Im Sonnenschein*, though it was not orchestrated until 1933. The picture intended by the poet, Richard Dehmel, is of a man and his dying wife, freed from sorrow by the transfiguring power of their love. Strauss sets the three verses to the same contour, starting gently and building to progressively more sustained and emotional climaxes. Dehmel thought the music was 'a little bit too soft, compared to the text'. Strauss included the music of the refrain 'O Glück' among many other self-quotations in his 1898 tone poem *Ein Heldenleben* (*A Hero's Life*).

Franz Liszt
Der du von dem Himmel bist (third version) S.279/3

In the 1860 (third) version of *Der du von dem Himmel bist*, the piano shuns any sense of display. The introduction is pared down to a few chords, and the momentum of the song is carried by the voice rather than the accompaniment. An interlude echoes the singer's line in the bass of the piano, and the final invocation gains in intensity by being focused on a single note, before two slowly alternating piano chords finally bring the swinging pendulum of joy and sorrow to a standstill.

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Richard Strauss
Im Sonnenschein Op. 87 No. 4

Noch eine Stunde laßt mich hier verweilen
im Sonnenschein,
mit Blumen Lust und Gram des Lebens teilen
im Sonnenschein!

Der Frühling kam und schrieb auf Rosenblättern
ein Traumgedicht
vom Paradies, ich las die goldnen Zeilen
im Sonnenschein.

Der Sommer kam, das Ird'sche zu verzehren
mit Himmelsbrand,
ich sah die Ros' erliegen seinen Pfeilen
im Sonnenschein.

Es kam der Herbst, das Leben heimzuholen;
ich sah ihn nahn,
und mit der Ros' in seiner Hand enteilen
im Sonnenschein.

Seid mir gegrüßt, ihr Bilder all des Lebens!
Die hier ich sah
um mich verweilen, mir vorüberreichen
im Sonnenschein.

Seid mir gegrüßt, ihr Wanderer des Lebens!
Die ohne mich
und die mit mir gewandert einige Weilen
im Sonnenschein.

Zurück ich blick' und seh' die Blumentäler
so leicht durchwallt,
und selbst den Berg, einst schwer erstiegen, steilen
im Sonnenschein.

Ich geh', die süße Müdigkeit des Lebens
nun auszuruhen,
die Lust, den Gram der Erde nun auszuheilen
im Sonnenschein.

Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)

Let me tarry here one more hour
in the sunshine,
sharing the pleasure and sadness of life with
the flowers
in the sunshine!

Spring came and wrote on the rose petals
a dreamy poem
about Paradise; I read the golden lines
in the sunshine.

Summer came to consume the earth
with divine fire,
and I saw the roses drooping their stems
in the sunshine.

Autumn came to call home life;
I saw it approach
and hurry away with roses in its hand
in the sunshine.

I greet you, shapes of life!
The ones I saw here
tarrying about me, hurry past
in the sunshine.

I greet you, travellers of life! –
those who wandered without me
and those who wandered with me for a little while
in the sunshine.

I look back and see the blooming valleys
undulating so lightly,
and the mountain that I once scaled with such
difficulty, sheer
in the sunshine.

I go now; let the sweet weariness of life
rest now,
and let the pleasure and sadness of the earth heal now
in the sunshine.

Translation by Emily Ezust

Franz Liszt

S'il est un charmont gazon

S'il est un charmant gazon
Que le ciel arrose,
Où brille en toute saison
Quelque fleur éclore,
Où l'on cueille à pleine main
Lys, chèvrefeuille et jasmin,
J'en veux faire le chemin
Où ton pied se pose !

S'il est un rêve d'amour,
Parfumé de rose,
Où l'on trouve chaque jour
Quelque douce chose,
Un rêve que Dieu bénit,
Où l'âme à l'âme s'unit,
Oh ! j'en veux faire le nid
Où ton cœur se pose !

Victor Hugo (1802–1885)

If there's a lovely grassy plot
watered by the sky
where in every season
some flower blossoms,
where one can freely gather
lilies, woodbine and jasmine,
I wish to make it the path
on which you place your feet.

If there is a dream of love
scented with roses,
where one finds every day
something gentle and sweet,
a dream blessed by God
where soul is joined to soul,
oh, I wish to make it the nest
in which you rest your heart.

Der du von dem Himmel bist

Der du von dem Himmel bist
Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillst,
Den, der doppelt elend ist,
Doppelt mit Entzückung füllst,
Ach ich bin des Treibens müde!
Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?
Süßer Friede,
Komm, ach komm in meine Brust!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)

You who are from heaven,
You quiet all sorrow and pain;
And he who is doubly wretched
You fill with twice as much comfort.
Ah! I am tired of being driven!
For what is all this pain and joy?
Sweet peace,
Come, ah, come into my heart!

Oh! quand je dors

Oh! quand je dors, viens auprès de ma couche,
comme à Pétrarque apparaissait Laura,
Et qu'en passant ton haleine me touche...
Soudain ma bouche
S'entrouvrira !

Sur mon front morne où peut-être s'achève
Un songe noir qui trop longtemps dura,
Que ton regard comme un astre se lève...
Et soudain mon rêve
Rayonnera !

Puis sur ma lèvre où voltige une flamme,
Éclair d'amour que Dieu même épura,
Pose un baiser, et d'ange deviens femme...
Soudain mon âme
S'éveillera !

Victor Hugo

Oh, when I sleep, approach my bed,
as Laura appeared to Petrarch;
and as you pass, touch me with your breath...
at once my lips
will part!

On my glum face, where perhaps
a dark dream has rested for too long a time,
let your gaze lift it like a star...
at once my dream
will be radiant!

Then on my lips, where there flits a brilliance,
a flash of love that God has kept pure,
place a kiss, and transform from angel into woman...
at once my soul
will awaken!

Johanna Müller-Hermann

Wie eine Vollmondnacht

Like a full moon night
Your eyes are like a full moon night,
so deeply mysterious and gentle.
Their gaze softly kisses me, shy of bliss,
And draw me with dream-steeped power
under their spell.

I stop existing,
A deep, sweet slumber lulls me,
Takes me far away on a crystal ferry.
And then light grows
Such a blissfully mild light
Veils are lifting from me and draw away,
oh bliss, oh bliss, I am with you!

German text by Joseph Rinaldini (1893–1977)
English translation © Natasha Loges

Richard Wagner

Wesendonck Lieder

Poems by Mathilde Wesendonck (1828–1902)

Der Engel

In der Kindheit frühen Tagen
Hort ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Daß, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

Daß, wo brunstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, fene jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

The angel

In the early days of childhood
I often heard tell of angels
Who exchange heaven's pure bliss
For the sun of earth,

So that, when a sorrowful heart
Hides its yearning from the world
And would silently bleed away
And dissolve in streams of tears,

And when its fervent prayer
Begs only for deliverance,
That angel will fly down
And gently raise the heart to heaven.
And to me too an angel descended,
And now on shining wings

Bear my spirit, free from all pain,
Towards heaven!

Stehe still!

Sausendes, brausendes Rad der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im weiten All,
Die ihr umringt den Weltenball;
Urewige Schöpfung, halte doch ein,
Genug des Werdens, laß mich sein!

Halte an dich, zeugende Kraft,
Urgedanke, der ewig schafft!
Hemmet den Atem, stillt den Drang,
Schweiget nur eine Sekunde lang!
Schwellende Pulse, fesselt den Schlag;
Ende, des Wollens ew'ger Tag!
Daß in selig süßem Vergessen
Ich mög' alle Wonne ermessen!

Wenn Auge in Auge wonnig trinken,
Seele ganz in Seele versinken;
Wesen in Wesen sich wiederfindet,
Und alles Hoffens Ende sich kündigt,
Die Lippe verstummt in staundendem Schweigen,
Keinen Wunsch mehr will das Innre zeugen:
Erkennt der Mensch des Ew'gen Spur,
Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge Natur!

Stand still!

Rushing, roaring wheel of time,
You that measure eternity;
Gleaming spheres in the vast universe,
You that surround our earthly sphere;
Eternal creation – cease:
Enough of becoming, let me be!

Hold yourselves back, generative powers,
Primal Thought that always creates!
Stop your breath, still your urge,
Be silent for a single moment!
Swelling pulses, restrain your beating;
Eternal day of the Will – end!
That in blessed, sweet oblivion
I might measure all my bliss!

When eye gazes blissfully into eye,
When soul drowns utterly in soul;
When being finds itself in being,
And the goal of every hope is near,
When lips are mute in silent wonder,
When the soul wishes for nothing more:
Then man perceives Eternity's footprint,
And solves your riddle, holy Nature!

Im Treibhaus

Hochgewölbte Blatterkronen,
Baldachine von Smaragd,
Kinder ihr aus fernen Zonen,
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die Zweige,
Malet Zeichen in die Luft,
Und der Leiden stummer Zeuge
Steiget aufwärts, süßer Duft.

Weit in sehndem Verlangen
Breitet ihr die Arme aus
Und umschlinget wahnbefangen
Oder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

Wohl ich weiß es, arme Pflanze:
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und Glanze,
Unsre Heimat is nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne scheidet
Von des Tages leerem Schein,
Hullet der, der wahrhaft leidet,
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel ein.

Stille wird's, ein sauselnd Weben
Fullet bang den dunklen Raum:
Schwere Tropfen seh' ich schweben
An der Blatter grunem Saum.

In the greenhouse

High-arching leafy crowns,
Canopies of emerald,
You children who dwell in distant climes,
Tell me, why do you lament?

Silently you bend your branches,
Inscribe your symbols on the air,
And a sweet fragrance rises,
As silent witness to you sorrows.

With longing and desire
You open wide your arms,
And embrace in your delusion
Desolation's awful void.

I am well aware, poor plant;
We both share a single fate,
Though bathed in gleaming light,
Our homeland is not here!

And just as the sun is glad to leave
The empty gleam of day,
The true sufferer veils himself
In the darkness of silence.

It grows quiet, a whirring whisper
Fills the dark room uneasily:
I see heavy droplets hanging
From the green edge of the leaves.

Schmerzen

Sonne, weinest jeden Abend
Dir die schdnen Augen rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel badend
Dich erreicht der fruhe Tod;

Doch erstehst in alter Pracht,
Glorie der dustren Welt,
Du am Morgen, neu erwacht,
Wie ein stolzer Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz, so schwer dich sehn,
Mußß die Sonne selbst verzagen,
Muß die Sonne untergehn?

Und gebieret Tod nur Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonnen nur:
O wie dank'ich daß gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur.

Agonies

Every evening, sun, you redder
Your lovely eyes with weeping,
When, bathing in the sea,
You die an early death;

Yet you rise in your old splendour,
The glory of the dark world,
When you wake in the morning
As a proud and conquering hero!

Ah, why should I complain,
Why should I see you, my heart, so depressed,
If the sun itself must despair,
If the sun itself must set?

If only death gives birth to life,
If only agony brings bliss:
O how I give thanks to Nature
For giving me such agony!

Träume

Sag, welch wunderbare Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfängen,
Daß sie nicht wie leere Schaume
Sind in odes Nichts vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder Stunde,
Jedem Tage schdner bluhn,
Und mit ihrer Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemute ziehn!

Träume, die wie hehre Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken,
Dort ein ewig Bild zu malen:
Allvergessen, Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn Frühlingssonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten kußt,
Daß zu nie geahnter Wonne
Sie der neue Tag begrüßt,
Daß sie wachsen, daß sie blühen,
Träumend spenden ihren Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust vergluhen,
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.

Dreams

Say, what wondrous dreams are these
Embracing all my senses,
That they have not, like bubbles,
Vanished to a barren void?

Dreams, that with every hour
Bloom more lovely every day,
And with their heavenly tidings
Float blissfully through the mind!

Dreams, that with glorious rays
Penetrate the soul,
There to paint an eternal picture:
Forgetting all, remembering one!

Dreams, as when the Spring sun
Kisses blossoms from the snow,
So the new day might welcome them
In unimagined bliss,

So that they grow and flower,
Bestow their scent as in a dream,
Fade softly away on your breast
And sink into their grave.

English Translations © Richard Stokes, author
of *The Book of Lieder* (Faber), provided via Oxford
International Song Festival www.oxfordsong.org

Johanna Müller-Hermann

Wandle Wie im Traum

Wandle wie im Traum befangen
durch die altbekannten Gassen,
weiß nicht, wohin ich geh',
was um mich seh',
weiß nur, dass fern von hier
meine Liebe lebt.

Still, o still, mein ungestümes Herz!
Schließt euch, Augen, vor dem Zauberglanz,
der aus wonnigem Erinnern bricht!

Ob ich froh dich wiederfinde,
nicht mit tränenreichen Wangen?
Wirst, wie in früh'rer Zeit
nach Trennungsleid
in Liebe mich umfängen?

Anon

I wander as if caught up in a dream
Through the old familiar lanes,
Not knowing where I am going,
What I am seeing about me,
Knowing only that far from here
Lives my love.

Be still, oh still, my tempestuous heart!
Close, eyes, before the magical lustre
That breaks from blissful remembering!

Might I find you happy,
Not with tearful cheeks?
Will you, as in former times,
After the sorrow of parting
Embrace me in love?

English translation by John Kent

Der letzte Abend

Sprich von der alten Zeit,
Von Tod und Ewigkeit –
Sprich nur vom Abschiednehmen nicht.
Der Mond kommt und verbleicht,
Die Nacht bricht an und weicht,
Und aufgehn muß des Tages Licht.

Noch halt ich deine Hand,
Dein Stab lehnt an der Wand,
Bei meinem liegt dein Hut im Fach.
Bald, bald bin ich allein
Und starr in blinder Pein
Dem Staub um deinen Wagen nach.

Was soll mir noch dein Kuß,
Da ich dich lassen muß?
Ich fühl ihn durch die Schmerzen kaum.
O liebstes Angesicht,
An meiner Brust so dicht,
Und morgen bist du nur ein Traum!

Wär es nur erst vorbei!
Wär meine Seele frei
Von dieser Angst, die mich zerbricht.
Sieh nicht so traurig aus,
Sonst schreit's mein Herz heraus:
Verlaß mich nicht, verlaß mich nicht!

Ricarda Huch (1864–1947)

The last evening

Speak of days gone by,
speak of death and eternity —
but not of farewell.

The moon rises and pales,
night falls and fades
and dawn must break.

Still I hold your hand,
your cane leans against the wall,
your hat lies by mine on the shelf.
Soon, soon I shall be alone
and stare in blind pain
at the dust around your receding carriage.
Of what use is your kiss,

now that I must leave you?
I scarce feel it through the agony.
O dearest face,
so close against my breast —
and tomorrow you shall be but a dream!

If only all were over!
If only my soul were free
of this fear that kills me.
Do not look so sad,
else my heart will scream:
do not leave me, do not leave me!

English translation © Richard Stokes

Richard Strauss

Befreit

Du wirst nicht weinen. Leise, leise
wirst du lächeln: und wie zur Reise
geb' ich dir Blick und Kuß zurück.
Unsre lieben vier Wände! Du hast sie bereitet,
ich habe sie dir zur Welt geweitet –
O Glück!

Dann wirst du heiß meine Hände fassen
und wirst mir deine Seele lassen,
läßt unsern Kindern mich zurück.
Du schenktest mir dein ganzes Leben,
ich will es ihnen wiedergeben –
O Glück!

Es wird sehr bald sein, wir wissen's beide,
wir haben einander befreit vom Leide;
so gab ich dich der Welt zurück.
Dann wirst du mir nur noch im Traum erscheinen
und mich segnen und mit mir weinen –
O Glück!

Richard Dehmel (1863–1920)

Freed

You will not weep. Gently
you will smile, and as before a journey,
I will return your gaze and your kiss.
Our dear four walls you have helped build;
and I have now widened them for you into the world.
O joy!

Then you will warmly seize my hands
and you will leave me your soul,
leaving me behind for our children.
You gave me your entire life,
so I will give it again to them.
O joy!

It will be very soon, as we both know –
but we have freed each other from sorrow.
And so I returned you to the world!
You will then appear to me only in dreams,
and bless me and weep with me.
O joy!

Franz Liszt

Der du von dem Himmel bist

See above



© Jakob Jurkšiek

Florian Störtz

German bass-baritone Florian Störtz announced his arrival on the European concert scene with victories at the 2023 International Handel Singing Competition and Helmut Deutsch Song Competition. Together with pianist Mark Rogers he also took the Prix de mélodie at the 2023 Lili et Nadia Boulanger competition in Paris and won the Young Artists Platform at the International Song Festival Zeist, Utrecht 2024. He is a Rising Star of the Enlightenment.

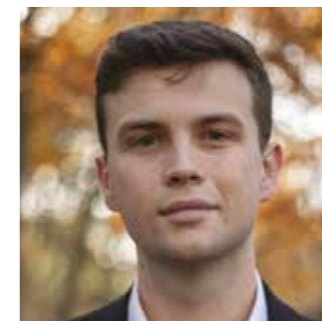
Recent engagements include Bach and Charpentier with the Monteverdi Choir under Christophe Rousset; Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Václav Luks and with the OAE under Masaaki Suzuki; Handel's *Esther* at the London Handel Festival with Laurence Cummings; Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic under Paul McCreech; Bach's *B Minor Mass* with The English Concert directed by Kristian Bezuidenhout and a European tour of the *Matthäuspassion* with the OAE under Jonathan Cohen.

Florian has recorded Duruflé's *Requiem* with the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge and Stephen Layton for Hyperion, and his début recital album with pianist Aleksandra Myslek for future release on Delphian.

He has given recitals in Leeds with Graham Johnson, Zell am See with Helmut Deutch, Carnegie Hall with Renée Fleming's SongStudio and French song recitals at Salle Cortot, Paris and Wigmore Hall.

His plans include Bach with Collegium Vocale Gent under Philippe Herrweghe as well as Handel's *Alceste* with the group and Sébastien Daucé; Solomon with the OAE and John Butt and Bach with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Dinis Sousa. He will make his opera début in *L'Orfeo* at Glyndebourne.

Florian is an alumnus of the Royal Academy of Music and the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme and receives generous support from the City Music Foundation. Having grown up in the music environment around Trier Cathedral, Germany he is now based in London. As a trained physicist Florian is passionate about the intersection of science and music.



Mark Rogers

Mark Rogers is an American pianist specializing in vocal and chamber music. He has been a Young Artist at the International Lied Festival Zeist, Leeds Lieder Festival, the Ludlow English Song Weekend, and has played for masterclasses with Christian Gerhaher, Martin Fröst, Felicity Lott, and Lawrence Power among others.

Together with regular recital partner baritone Florian Störtz, they won the Prix de Mélodie at the Concours Nadia et Lilli Boulanger and the audience and First prize at the Helmut Deutsch Lieder Competition. Mark performs recitals regularly with musicians on the Countess of Munster and Philharmonia schemes and has played concerts at Scottish Parliament, the Malmö Radhuset, and a series of recitals at Atelier Ferrandou in the south of France with cellist Kristian Chojecki. Previously, he was the accompanist for BBC Choir of the year Les Sirenes and is a staff pianist at Oxenfoord summer school.

Mark is an alumnus of the Royal Academy of Music where he studied with James Baillieu, Malcolm Martineau, and Michael Dussek. was recently awarded the first prize in Art Song accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music and has previously been awarded the Alex Menzies Memorial prize and the Hester Dickson Lieder prize at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where he completed his undergraduate studies with Graeme McNaught in 2021.

In addition to performing, he has won first prize from the Royal Philharmonic Society for his article on Samuel Barber in their Young Classical Writers competition and writes programme notes for the Wigmore Hall.

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Alekhem, rov Feidman!

Le Rossignol en amour

Euphotic

Air on a G String

Dido's Lament – When I am laid in Earth

Facades

Susseros Brasileiros

Somewhere

Primavera

Kuku

Recuerdos de la Alhambra

Fantaisie Brillante sur des airs de Carmen

Since forming their duo in 2016, saxophonist Huw Wiggin and harpist Oliver Wass have continued to develop and refine their programmes of music for this unusual pairing of instruments. Huw and Oliver particularly enjoyed their recent concerts for Absolute Classics and Gower Festival, and have developed a reputation as warm communicators who draw audiences into their intimate and engaging performances.

The duo features on Orchid Classics disc *Reflections* which received a four-star review from BBC Music Magazine and five stars from Robert Hugill, who described the duo as “a seemingly unlikely combination that works real magic”. The disc reached No. 2 in the UK Specialist Classical Chart and No. 6 in the iTunes Classical Chart. Shortly after the release they were also featured by Classic FM, who filmed and released a video containing a selection of items from *Reflections*.

Béla Kovács (1937–2021)
Sholem-alekhem, rov. Feidman!

Béla Kovács was a Hungarian clarinettist and composer. A graduate of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, he returned there as professor of clarinet, combining this with work as principal clarinettist with leading Hungarian orchestras. Kovács is widely known among clarinettists for his set of solo concert etudes called *Hommages*, which pay tribute to ten composers from Bach to Khachaturian.

Sholem-alekhem, rov. Feidman! (Peace be with you, honoured master Feidman) is another tribute, this time to a great clarinettist. Giora Feidman (b. 1936) was born in Argentina into the fourth generation of a Jewish family of musicians. He became the youngest clarinettist ever to play in the Israel Symphony Orchestra, before embarking in the 1970s on a solo career that broke the boundaries between classical music and traditional Jewish klezmer, and included playing the clarinet solos in *Schindler's List*. Kovács' work celebrates Feidman's role in the resurgence of klezmer music in the late twentieth century. It opens with an improvisatory solo of long, melancholy lines and vivid ornamentation, establishing a regular beat under a more formal melody before accelerating into a characteristic klezmer dance, at first poised and proud and finally whirling to an extrovert finish.

François Couperin (1668–1733)
Le Rossignol en amour

François Couperin 'le grand' belonged to an extensive dynasty of French musicians and enjoyed court employment and royal patronage throughout his life – appointed as one of Louis XIV's organists at the age of 25, assuming the privileged position of royal harpsichordist in 1717 and benefiting from a 20-year licence to print and sell his own music. His greatest legacy was twenty-six suites for harpsichord, each comprising a variety of pieces with descriptive titles, published between 1713 and 1730.

Le Rossignol en amour (The nightingale in love), from the fourteenth suite, is clearly going to evoke a deliciously romantic scene. But Couperin is careful to warn the player against getting carried away: he marks the piece 'slowly and very tenderly but in steady time'; elsewhere, he refers players to his book, *L'art de toucher le clavecin*, to make sure that they are following precisely his system of ornamentation. The elegant melody opens with gently rising and falling phrase (a major-key version of the tune that we have just heard in the middle of Béla Kovács *Sholem-alekhem*), and culminates in an accelerating phrase of birdsong – its naturalness to be achieved, writes Couperin, 'by imperceptible gradations' incapable of notation.

Charlotte Harding (1989–)
Euphotic

Charlotte Harding is an award-winning composer, orchestrator and saxophonist. Drawing on an eclectic mix of classical and cross-genre influences, her work has been performed at London's concert halls and at festivals across the county, and played on BBC Radio 3, Radio 6 and Soho Radio. She won an Ivors Composer Award for *Convo*, a musical journey through human evolution commissioned by the Tri-borough Music Hub and premiered at the Royal Albert Hall in 2019. Her catalogue includes numerous solo and ensemble compositions for saxophone, and she co-founded 'Over 100 Years of Women and the Saxophone' which launched at the World Saxophone Congress in Strasbourg in 2015.

The 'euphotic' or 'sunlight' zone is the upper layer of a body of water where there is light energy sufficient for photosynthesis to occur. *Euphotic* explores this effervescent interplay of rays and waves, with the luminous soprano saxophone dancing across the sea spray, splashes and billowing crests evoked by the rippling harp.

J.S. Bach (1685–1750)
Air on the G String

Like the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, or the end of Rossini's *William Tell* overture, this Air from Bach's third orchestral suite, written around 1720, has escaped its original context to become universally familiar, without losing any of its ability to captivate. Not only the melody, but every layer of the four-part texture contributes to the effect, with intertwining melodic phrases in the inner parts and an evenly-pacing, descending bass line – the forerunner of *A Whiter Shade of Pale*, among many others. It was the violinist August Wilhelmj who associated it with the G string – the lowest and most mellow string on the violin – in an arrangement in 1871. This transposed the music to a lower key, assigned the melody to a solo player who was instructed to play on the G string throughout, muted the accompanying strings and added romanticised expression marks to Bach's original. Not surprisingly, it has since been successfully arranged for a host of other instruments and ensembles.

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)
Dido's Lament – When I am laid in Earth

Henry Purcell's only opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, was written in 1689 for performance by the 'young gentlewomen' of Josias Priest's boarding school in Chelsea. The girls were perhaps aware that, as a fully composed English opera, it was a very unusual work for its time; but they could hardly have guessed that it would be unequalled for at least the next two and a half centuries. The plot, drawn from Virgil's *Aeneid*, concerns the love of Dido for Aeneas, a Trojan on his way to found Rome after the destructions of Troy by the Greeks. After a short-lived affair, Aeneas answers the call of destiny, and abandons Dido to die of her grief. Her lament is a masterpiece of construction and expression, its bass line repeated stubbornly below her cries – 'Remember me, but, ah! forget my fate'.

Philip Glass (1937–)
arr. Marilyn Shrupe
Façades

In the later twentieth century, minimalist composers developed styles that are totally absorbing although, to ears accustomed to traditional compositions, hardly anything happens. Philip Glass described this as discovering 'another mode of listening – one in which neither memory nor anticipation have a place in the musical experience.'

Glass studied at the Juilliard Music School and with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, and met non-European

traditions through work with the leading Indian musicians, sitarist Ravi Shankar and tabla-player Alla Rakha. Rejecting both his own early works and most of the current avant-garde, he developed a pared-down style in the mid-1960s that combined simple tonal shapes with a continuous flow of notes, free from the patterned accents of Western metres.

By 1982, the year of *Façades*, he had allowed harmony, and even some melody, back into his music. The work was written as accompaniment to Godfrey Reggio's cult film *Koyaanisqatsi (Life Out of Balance)*, a documentary film without dialogue or voice-over intended as 'an essay in images and sound on the state of American civilisation'. The music was to accompany a montage of shots of New York's Wall Street on a Sunday morning, with reflections in the windows of the skyscrapers, but was not used in the final sound-track.

Andy Scott (1966–)
Susseros Brasileiros

Andy Scott is a busy composer, saxophonist and teacher. Among his many commissions, he won a British Composer Award in 2006 for *Dark Rain*, a concerto for two saxophones and wind band. Since 2008 he has been Composer in Residence for Foden's Band, who issued a CD of his works in 2010. He is a saxophone tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and co-founder of the RNCM Saxophone Day, the UK's largest annual event of its kind. He is a founder member and saxophonist of the Apollo Saxophone Quartet and the saxophone band SaxAssault, and with his wife, the harpist Lauren Scott, created the Sandbach Concert Series, in which young musicians share the platform with professionals.

Andy Scott writes: '*Susseros Brasileiros is a virtuosic and unrelenting three and a half minutes of music written for alto saxophone and pedal harp, a commission from Huw Wiggin & Oliver Wass. My concept was to combine grooves and musical rhythms that I love from Brazil with the many sound worlds that are available to the saxophone and harp via contemporary classical music. As a result, extended techniques are heard within a melodic and open harmonic musical canvas, with a strong sense of Duo interaction. Don't blink!*'

Susseros Brasileiros was given a world premiere by Huw Wiggin & Oliver Wass at Kendal Midday Concerts in December 2025. The premiere recording of *Susseros Brasileiros* is on the album *Elements*, released in May 2026 with Orchid Classics, performed by Huw Wiggin & Oliver Wass. *Susseros Brasileiros* is published by Astute Music Ltd.

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)
Somewhere

If you need one figure to represent Western music in the second half of the twentieth century, Leonard Bernstein is surely the person to choose. As a composer, he defied distinctions between 'classical' and 'popular', in music ranging from film scores and musicals to orchestral and sacred works. He was an internationally renowned conductor, and an inspirational teacher, lecturer and broadcaster.

West Side Story, completed in 1957 and arguably the greatest twentieth-century musical, is a virtuoso blend of music in many different styles – Latin-American, jazz, 'fifties jive and comparatively traditional love songs. Having started, and stalled, as *East Side Story*, when its star-crossed lovers were a Jewish girl and Catholic boy, the writing took off when the context was switched to the topical issue of gang conflict in New York. Bernstein's genius was matched by the skill of the author, Arthur Laurents, and the lyricist Stephen Sondheim, just embarking on his own stellar career. The 1961 film won ten Oscars and cemented the music in the public imagination, not least for the heart-wrenching reprise of *Somewhere* with which it ends.

Ludovico Einaudi (1955–)
Primavera

Ludovico Einaudi was born in Turin, the son of a leading publisher and grandson of a former president of Italy; music came through his mother's side. He started composing as a teenager on a folk guitar, and went on to study at the Conservatorio Verdi in Milan and at the Tanglewood Institute in Lenox, Massachusetts. From classical beginnings, he has incorporated features of popular, folk and world music into a personal and deceptively naïve-sounding style. His prolific output includes over thirty film scores and music for numerous commercials, but he is best known for his solo piano works, recorded in several dozen albums, from *Le Onde (The Waves)* in 1996 to last year's *The Summer Portraits*. Einaudi is something of a 'marmite' composer, whose calm, arpeggiated style, largely free from intellectual or technical challenge, has both keen devotees and critics who dismiss it as 'wallpaper music'. *Primavera (Spring)* opens with the lulling calm of 'ambient' music, but goes on to overlay this with two exuberant outbursts of racing scales, celebrating the excitement of spring growth while the steady march of the seasons continues underneath.

Barry Cockcroft (1972–)
Ku Ku

Saxophonist and composer Barry Cockcroft is one of the world's leading exponents of the instrument, enjoying an extraordinary international presence through his compositions, performances, publications, teaching and podcasts. After studying in Australia, and France, he performed for two decades with major Australian orchestras. He has an extensive catalogue of original compositions for saxophone and saxophone ensemble, and collaborates with many other composers to develop the repertoire of the instrument. He works internationally as a teacher and adjudicator, and his podcast, *The Barry Sax Show* features interviews with many of the world's leading saxophonists.

Ku Ku is a witty virtuoso extravaganza for solo soprano saxophone, inspired when Cockcroft was practising Luciano Berio's *Sequenza VII* and a friend commented that he sounded like a chicken. The title uses the Swahili word for chicken – ku ku – but the pun on 'cuckoo', crazy, is clear enough. After an evocative opening (sunrise?), an exercise in fast figuration soon turns into a study in extended techniques. As the chicken's clucking becomes more excited, 'slap' tonguing adds percussion and special fingerings create comic squawking chords to complete the picture.

Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909)
Recuerdos de la Alhambra

At a time when the piano was in the ascendent among Spanish musical circles, and the guitar was regarded as merely an accompanying instrument for singers, Francisco Tárrega was determined to become a solo guitarist. In search of his dream, he ran away from home at the age of 10 to play in the cafes of Barcelona; brought home by his father, he absconded twice more as a young teenager. Eventually, he found a sponsor for his studies at the Madrid Royal Conservatory and – hardly less important – a fine enough instrument to demonstrate the guitar's solo capabilities. Subsequently, through international tours, teaching, composition and arrangements, Tárrega paved the way for the concert guitarists of the twentieth century.

Recuerdos de la Alhambra was written in 1899, after a visit to Granada in the company of his patron, and was originally headed "Improvisation. To Granada! Arab Song. For my distinguished student Señora Donna Conchita G. de Jacoby". The melody is famously played using the tremolo technique – three fingers sustaining the melody through rapidly repeated notes, whilst the harmonic foundation is picked out below in longer notes.

François Borne (1840–1920)
Fantaisie Brillante sur des airs de Carmen

The innovations in flute construction by Theobald Boehm in the mid nineteenth century opened the door to a wave of virtuoso performers, and composers were quick to write pieces that showed off the qualities of the new instruments, which included better intonation across the whole range, and facility with rapid, brilliant runs, arpeggios and leaps. François Borne's *Fantaisie brillante* was originally written for the flute, but perhaps captures even more of the opera's intensity through the emotional tone-quality of the saxophone.

Borne, who contributed some technical modifications to Boehm's developments, was professor of flute at the Toulouse Conservatoire, and principal flautist at the Bordeaux opera house – an ideal background for writing showpieces based on the latest operas. The *Fantaisie Brillante* opens with a bold version of the angular 'fate' motif that hangs over the final scene of *Carmen*. As if exploring its way into the action, the music turns this way and that in improvisatory fragments of other themes, alternately brilliant and expressive, returning to the 'fate' motif, now expressively shaped on the saxophone.

A piano interlude leads to the central part of the work, two variations on Carmen's famous habanera, *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* – the first decorating the theme with flowing arpeggios and the second with racing scales, leaps and repeated notes. The piano introduces the *Chanson Bohème (Gypsy Song)*, soon overlaid by the saxophone with runs that sweep across the instrument. Finally, piano and saxophone share a snatch of the 'Toreador's Song' before the music builds up for a final set of instrumental fireworks.

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Huw Wiggin

Huw Wiggin has captivated audiences around the world, performing in renowned venues from the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing to London's Wigmore Hall. Following his debut at London's Purcell Room he was praised by the Times for his "*Liquid gold tones and enviable breath control*".

Huw has appeared at prestigious venues including the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, St John's Smith Square and The Elgar Room. He has also been a guest at festivals in the UK such as Henley, Edinburgh Fringe, Newbury, Ryedale, Petworth, Chiltern Arts and Champs Hill, as well as internationally at the Bermuda Festival.

Since winning First Prize and Gold Medal and being named 'Commonwealth Musician of the Year' at the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition, Huw has developed a vibrant career as a soloist and chamber musician. His debut disc on Orchid Classics, *Reflections* (2018), reached No. 2 in the UK Specialist Classical Chart and BBC Music Magazine praised Huw for bringing "*dazzling flair and imagination to his performance*". His most recent album *Rhapsody* with Noriko Ogawa, features Debussy's *Rhapsody for Saxophone* and new commissions by Joseph Phibbs, Jennifer Watson and Iain Farrington. His next album on Orchid Classics is due for release in 2026 with harpist Oliver Wass, featuring new commissions by Yshani Perinpanayagam, Andy Scott, Laura Bowler, David Wallace, Charlotte Harding and Simon Rowland-Jones.

Huw is a member of the award-winning Ferio Saxophone Quartet. Since winning the Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Prize they have performed extensively throughout the UK and beyond, with appearances at Bermuda Festival, Wigmore Hall, The Purcell Room and St John's Smith Square. They have recorded three albums with Chandos Records and their next release will focus on composer and arranger Iain Farrington, with arrangements by Florence Price, Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Weill, Gershwin and Scott Joplin.

Monday 11 May • 7.30pm
Highclere Castle, Highclere
RG20 9RN

A passionate educator, Huw is Professor of Saxophone at the Royal Academy of Music in London and regularly gives masterclasses in the UK and abroad at conservatoires including the Royal College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Chetham's School of Music, the Purcell School, NAFA Singapore and the Universities of Lethbridge and Calgary in Canada. Committed to outreach and education, he has worked with arts organisations including Future Talent UK and the Royal Over-seas League.

Huw is a Vandoren Paris and Henri Selmer Paris saxophone artist. Having grown up in Henley-on-Thames into a rowing family, he is a keen sportsman and keeps fit alongside his music making.



Oliver Wass

Oliver Wass has won the Suoni d'Arpa International Competition in Italy, the International Harp Competition of Slovenia, and the Jury Prize at the International Harp Competition in Szeged, Hungary. In May 2016 he became the first harpist ever to win the Guildhall Gold Medal – the Guildhall's most prestigious prize.

He has performed every major harp concerto, including *Lyra Angelica* with the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto with The Mozartists at the Wigmore Hall, the Debussy Danes with 12 Ensemble at the Wigmore Hall, and he has directed the Handel Harp Concerto in the Barbican Hall.

He plays both modern and early harps, and has performed the Handel Harp Concerto with the English Concert at the Wigmore Hall on the triple harp, as well as touring to New York's Carnegie Hall, Berlin Philharmonie and Salzberg Mozarteum.

Playing with "verve and polish" (The Times), his flute-violin-harp trio, The Pelléas Ensemble, won the Royal Philharmonic Society Henderson Award and the Elias Fawcett Award for Outstanding Chamber Ensemble at the Royal Overseas League competition. They have also won both the Grand

Prize and the Audience Prize in the St Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition.

Oliver holds a First Class Masters Degree from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he studied with Imogen Barford. He graduated from the University of York with a First Class Honours degree in Chemistry.

Despite having spent his teenage years making fireworks in his parents' basement, he still remarkably has all of his fingers.

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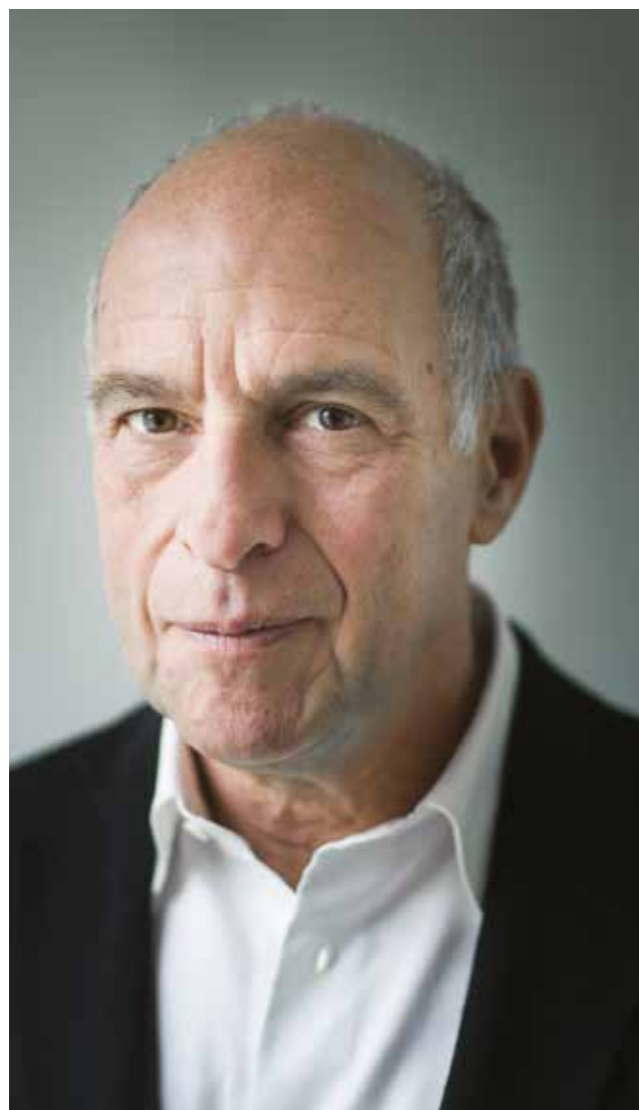
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The Artist and the Eternal City: Bernini, Pope Alexander VII, and the Making of Rome

A talk by Loyd Grossman

Loyd Grossman writer & broadcaster

Sponsored by Mr & Mrs Robin Aird



By 1650, the spiritual and political power of the Catholic Church was shattered. Thanks to the twin blows of the Protestant Reformation and the Thirty Years War, Rome – celebrated both as the Eternal City and Caput Mundi (the head of the world) – had lost its preeminent place in Europe. Then a new Pope, Alexander VII, fired with religious zeal, political guile, and a mania for creating new architecture, determined to restore the prestige of his church by making Rome the key destination for Europe's intellectual, political, and cultural elite. This afternoon talk will explore more of the history of this fascinating city.

Sir Loyd has a lifelong interest in history, the arts and heritage, receiving a PhD from the University of Cambridge and serving on the board of a number of cultural institutions including English Heritage, the British School at Rome and the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association. He is Chairman of The Royal Parks, Chair of the Royal Society of Arts, President of The Arts Society and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is well-known as a writer and presenter for a wide range of television programmes including *Through the Keyhole*, *MasterChef*, *Behind the Headlines*, *History of British Sculpture*, *Loyd on Location* and *Build Britain*. He also wrote and presented a series, *Composers at Home*, for BBC Radio 3.

Sir Loyd Grossman CBE

Loyd Grossman is Chair of the Royal Parks and Chair of the Royal Society of Arts. He was born in Boston in 1950 and graduated from Boston University (BA), the London School of Economics (MSc Econ) and Magdalene College, Cambridge (PhD, MPhil).

He began writing for various music publications – including *Rolling Stone*, *Fusion* and *Vibrations* – while an undergraduate. After starting a full-time career in journalism with *Harpers & Queen* and *The Sunday Times* he was diverted into television where as a writer, presenter or deviser he was involved in a wide range of programmes including *Through the Keyhole*, *MasterChef*, *Behind the Headlines*, *History of British Sculpture*, *Loyd on Location* and *Build Britain*. He also wrote and presented a series, *Composers at Home*, for Radio 3.

Loyd's knowledge of, and fascination with, food led him to create his own brand in 1995, which became Britain's most successful new premium food brand.

His lifelong interest in history, the arts and heritage has involved him in a number of organisations. He is a former Commissioner of the Museums and Galleries Commission, a former Commissioner of English Heritage (where he was Chairman of the Museums Advisory Committee and the Blue Plaques Panel), a former Commissioner of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, a founding member of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, a past member of the board of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, a former Governor of Compton Verney and a past Member of the Council of the British School at Rome, past Chairman of National Museums Liverpool and of the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, past Deputy Chairman of Liverpool European Capital of Culture and past President of the British Association of Friends of Museums.

Loyd was Chair of Gresham College from 2019-2024, Chairman of the Heritage Alliance from 2009-2018, Chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust from 2007-2016, Chairman of the University for the Creative Arts from 2008-2012, Deputy Chairman of The Royal Drawing School from 2014-2017, a Governor of The British Institute of Florence, a member of the Court of Governors of the LSE from 1996-2009, and is now an Emeritus Governor of the LSE. He is a trustee of Opera Holland Park

He is Master of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters, a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars, an Honorary Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Loyd was appointed OBE in 2003 and was awarded a Doctor of Letters degree in 2007 by the University of Chester in recognition of his heritage work. In January 2011 the University of Lincoln awarded him an honorary Doctor of Arts degree in recognition of his contribution to the cultural heritage sector and in October 2014 the University of Essex awarded Loyd an honorary Doctor of the University in recognition of his contribution to tourism and hospitality. Following his appointment to CBE in 2015 in recognition of his services to Heritage, Loyd was appointed Knight Bachelor in December 2024.

Loyd is a keen guitarist and he and his band – The New Forbidden – made their eighth appearance at Glastonbury in June 2019. He plays with Jethro Tull in their annual Christmas cathedral concerts.

RANT

Bethany Reid • Anna Massie • Lauren MacColl • Gillian Frame

Sponsored by The Storey Family Trust



© Paul Jennings Photography

Having recently celebrated a decade or touring together Scotland's 'chamber-folk' quartet RANT released their latest album *SPIN* to much critical acclaim last year. A bold, ambitious and reflective collection, *SPIN* is an album of reinterpretation – RANT's take on influential tracks from their formative years. Music of bands and players from across the globe who inspired them individually and collectively. The album is a tribute to those influences, and whilst nostalgic by nature has a fresh, confident, energised approach synonymous with the band's well-established resonant sound.

With three acclaimed albums under their belt, RANT remain at the forefront of the Scottish fiddle scene. The meeting of four of the country's finest players, the quartet use just their fiddles to weave a tapestry of melodies, textures, layers and sounds.

Bethany Reid from Shetland, Anna Massie and Lauren MacColl from the Highland peninsula of the Black Isle, and Gillian Frame from Arran join forces to showcase the combined resonance of their instruments with repertoire unearthed from both old collections and their own contemporary writing. RANT create a sound which is both spacious and lush, yet retaining all the earthy bite and spark of a traditional Scottish fiddle player.

Known for their love of playing in beautiful spaces, their 2019 album – *The Portage* – was recorded in the renowned Mackintosh Queen's Cross, the only church in the world to be designed by architect, artist and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The recording – a stark and honest reflection of their live sound – was awarded 'Top of the World' status from Songlines Magazine.

Since the release of their debut album *RANT* in 2013 which won them critical acclaim in the form of a Herald Angel Award for outstanding performance across all the Edinburgh Festivals, the band have made major festival and concert appearances across the UK, Ireland and Scandinavia. They provided strings for Julie Fowlis' *Gach Sguel* album, and their music has been used for both BBC and ITV national television programmes.

Their live set – whether on the festival stage or an intimate church – reflects years of honing their sound together and their love for the music of their respective home regions through their writing, repertoire and stories.

"Chamber-folk of the highest order" Scotsman

"An irresistible journey through reels, strathspeys and jigs" Songlines

"It is honest, deep instrumental music at its finest."
Folk Radio UK

"The album feels alive"
Irish Music Magazine

"This is powerful and evocative music that is invigorating, bewitching and beautiful."
Folk Radio UK

"absolutely compelling" Songlines

"Sheer class" ***** The Herald

Homecoming

Ruby Hughes soprano • Tamsin Waley-Cohen violin • Huw Watkins piano

Sponsored by Harbrook Farm and The Gordon Palmer Charitable Trust



Biber	<i>Guardian Angel</i>
Vaughan Williams	<i>Along the Field</i>
Vaughan Williams	<i>The Lark Ascending</i>
D Pritchard	<i>Liberty</i>
INTERVAL	
Gershwin	<i>Bess you is my woman now</i>
Wallen	<i>Timeless~the lake</i>
Gershwin	<i>Summertime</i>
Wallen	<i>North</i>
Gershwin	<i>It ain't necessarily so</i>
Wallen	<i>On the mountain</i>
Bloch	<i>Vidui</i>
Bach	<i>Erbarme dich</i>
Schubert	<i>Hirt auf dem felsen</i>

Three of Britain's leading musicians come together for this evening's special concert on the theme of Homecoming, culminating in an arrangement of Schubert's sublime masterpiece *Shepherd on the Rock*.

Ruby Hughes is a former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, holds a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and was shortlisted for a 2014 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award. Through her blossoming catalogue of recordings and lovingly curated performances, she has become known for her interpretations of the music of the baroque and 20th and 21st Century.

British-American violinist Tamsin Waley-Cohen is known for her visceral and deeply expressive performances in repertoire spanning six centuries. With musical storytelling central to her approach, she has gained a reputation for poetic performances that go straight to the heart.

Huw Watkins has appeared as soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Britten Sinfonia, and the London Sinfonietta, and performs throughout Europe and North America as soloist and chamber musician, alongside his flourishing composing career

Tamsin Waley-Cohen writes:

"Our Homecoming programme grew from discussions around the idea of Home – What does home mean? Where does a feeling of home come from? Why does it matter?"

"Like so many essential elements of life, while home may be a universal concept, it is paradoxically surely different for every one of us too. Through the music we have chosen for this programme, we have tried to incorporate ideas of our own cultural identities, displacement, nostalgia, the courage to build a new home, and the question of whether home comes from within us, those around us, or is rooted in a sense of belonging to a particular land. As we live through the biggest global refugee crisis in history, this painful reality cannot be ignored when we explore the idea of Home. Deborah Pritchard's new work Liberty explores ideas of hope and freedom as essential to creating a sense of home from within, and the deep spirituality of her work emphasises these essential human rights."

"Woven throughout the programme are references to ancient folk songs, grounding us to generation past, present, and future, as well as music which gives us personally a sense of nurturing homeliness."

Heinrich Biber (1644–1704) *Guardian Angel*

In the later seventeenth century, Heinrich Biber established himself as the leading violinist in the German-speaking countries of Europe. Born in Wartenburg, Bohemia, Biber worked for the Prince-Bishop of Olomouc at his castle in Kroměříž, Moravia, where in his twenties he was already known as a 'formidable virtuoso'. In 1670 he moved to the court of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, where he settled for the rest of his life, his work focused on Christian worship.

Early in the last century a collection of his compositions was discovered in the Kroměříž archive, including a set of 16 pieces for violin, now known as the *Rosary Sonatas*, which survive in a single manuscript copy. Fifteen are connected with the Rosary devotions traditional in Salzburg in the autumn. The sixteenth piece is headed by an engraving of a child and an angel, and was probably intended for the Feast of the Guardian Angel, celebrated in the same season. It is an extended passacaglia over a four-note bass theme that is rich in associations, as it is both a traditional ground bass and the first four notes of a hymn, *Einen Engel Gott mir geben – May God give me an angel*.

Over 65 iterations of this four-bar phrase, Biber constructs a monumental movement equally

remarkable for its technical demands and its imaginative flights of fancy. The four notes of the ground bass appear in isolation at the start and three times later on, dividing the work into four sections. Another landmark is provided when the repeating phrase moves an octave higher, leading the music, perhaps metaphorically as well as literally, into a higher realm. Notable too are the contrasting textures, ranging from solemn, sustained lines to excitable rhythms and vivid streaks of instrumental colour.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) *Along the Field*

- 1 *We'll to the woods no more*
- 2 *Along the field*
- 3 *The half-moon westers low*
- 4 *In the morning*
- 5 *The sigh that heaves the grasses*
- 6 *Good-bye*
- 7 *Fancy's knell*
- 8 *With rue my heart is laden*

Ralph Vaughan Williams came from a family of movers and shakers, including philosophers and scientists, industrialists and philanthropists. His father, who died when Vaughan Williams was only two years old, was vicar of Down Ampney in Gloucestershire. His mother belonged to the Wedgwood family of porcelain manufacturers, and was the niece of Charles Darwin. It was a family in which prosperity came coupled with social responsibility and an extremely powerful work ethic. With a modest private income that meant he could choose when and how to work, Vaughan Williams nevertheless worked ceaselessly; he composed his first piece, *The Robin's Nest*, at the age of five, and finished his ninth symphony eighty years (and two world wars) later.

Vaughan Williams' mature style was woven over many years from varied musical strands, ancient and modern, British and continental. He studied at the Royal College of Music with Parry and Stanford, and later with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris. He drew inspiration from the Tudor period and from early years showed a natural affinity for folk music, collecting and studying folk songs intensively in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The eight songs of *Along the Field*, with their unusual combination of violin and voice, were written for the violinist Marie Hall, and soprano Joan Elwes, who gave the first performance in 1927. The eight poems drawn from the work of A E Housman present a its nostalgic view of rural England, coupled with an ironic and pessimistic view of human life and relationships. In a letter asking Joan Elwes for her thoughts on the songs, Vaughan Williams wrote,

"They are experimental in places and I may not like them when I hear them – so say exactly what you think".

We'll to the woods no more is the Prologue to Housman's *Last Poems*. For the poet, it was a deeply personal farewell to a man he had been in love with as a student, and who was now terminally ill. The words are set to a flexible recitative, with the violin weaving arabesques above it. *Along the Field* comes from *A Shropshire Lad*, published twenty-six years earlier; Vaughan Williams sets it to a folk-like tune reminiscent of the traditional carol *The truth sent from above*, over a sustained drone that underlines the recurrent pattern of love and death. *The half-moon westers low* is one of the most 'experimental' songs in the set. In Housman's enigmatic poem, the beloved may be abroad, or dead, or even perhaps in the same bed, separated by a psychological distance. The harmony, thickened with double stopping on the violin, is dissonant and rootless, with chords shifting across the nebulous interval of the 'tritone', and disconcerting clashes between voice and violin. *In the morning* is an ironic depiction of the morning after a one-night stand at some outdoor village festivity. At the end of the brief poem, the couple simply 'look away'; Vaughan Williams matches this disunity musically by writing an arching violin ostinato, marked 'appassionato', that seems to have little to do with the nonchalant story-telling of the vocal part.

The sigh that heaves the grasses is another harmonic experiment, full of shifting tritones and suggestions of atonality. The setting is pastoral, but man and nature are disconnected – the grasses know nothing of the body buried below them. *Goodbye* strikes a happier note, with a folk-like melody accompanied by a fiddle jig telling the story of a failed wooer. *Fancy's Knell*, which closes *Last Poems*, recalls past merry-making, with the violin taking on the role of the flute played by the narrator of the poem. At the end, the song turns to air, and the poet to earth. The elegiac *With rue my heart is laden*, from *A Shropshire Lad*, balances the opening song, as a short, reflective epilogue.

Ralph Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*

The Lark Ascending was Vaughan Williams' first composition for Marie Hall, sketched just before the outbreak of World War I. Although he was over 40, Vaughan Williams volunteered and served in France and Greece. Picking up the threads again, he completed the work in 1920, alongside other works reflecting his love of the English countryside to which he was now able to return. Subtitled *A Romance*, the work is headed by lines from the poem of the same

name by George Meredith, including the evocative phrase 'He drops the silver chain of sound'. The reviewer of *The Times* said of its first performance that it 'showed serene disregard of the fashions of to-day or of yesterday. It dreams its way along...'

The Lark Ascending is both a piece of picturesque programme music and an elegy for a disappearing rural England that the war had thrust even further into the past. It is also a miniature concerto; but a concerto turned inside out. In a conventional concerto the soloist's part, however showy, is framed by a broader musical structure. In this work, it is the soloist's rhapsodic cadenzas that frame the whole design. The episodes of more organised melody and ensemble take a subsidiary place, like rural scenes of temporary human interest during our contemplation of the flight and song of the violin/lark. It's a sad irony that just when this work has achieved such popularity, human activity makes it ever harder to enjoy the spectacle of a real skylark.

Deborah Pritchard (1977–) *Liberty, for soprano, violin and piano*

British composer Deborah Pritchard studied at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Royal Academy of Music, and at Worcester College, Oxford. Her music has been performed and broadcast worldwide; recent premieres range from the solo cello work *Radiance*, a response to Marc Chagall's *Peace Window* at the United Nations to the large-scale *Kandinsky Songs* for chorus and orchestra, performed at the Forbidden City Concert Hall, Beijing, China in 2024. Both of these reflect her interest in visual art and her synaesthesia, a relationship between colours and intervals that she says seem 'so natural to me... When I engage with colour, light and darkness in my work, I become aware of a broader emotional content and hope to illuminate some kind of beauty to the listener'.

Liberty, for soprano, violin and piano, was premiered at the Two Moors Festival in 2023. It sets a collection of diverse poetry on the theme of home, spanning the centuries from the metaphysical to the current day. Whilst John Donne's *No Man is an Island* presents humanity as part of a greater whole, *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus (engraved on the Statue of Liberty) celebrates the Mother of Exiles, opening a golden door to hope. The cycle concludes in the 21st century, elevating the global community and diaspora with *Alight* by Jamaican poet Dave Neita. Deborah's work illuminates the profound meaning of what home means to humanity through an expressive dialogue between voice and ensemble, taking a synaesthetic approach to the light, darkness and colour of the narrative.

George Gershwin (1898–1937) arr. Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987) *Bess you is my woman now; Summertime; It ain't necessarily so*

George Gershwin's parents were Ukrainian-Jewish, and had moved to the United States less than a decade before he was born. He had piano lessons and worked in Tin Pan Alley, demonstrating the latest popular songs in music stores. He shot to fame and fortune at the age of 21, when Al Jolson took up the song *Swanee*. During the 1920s he collaborated with his lyricist brother, Ira, in many light and successful shows, and blended African-American elements with European models in *Rhapsody in Blue* and other works.

The opera *Porgy and Bess*, first performed in 1935, is a controversial landmark in American music, based on the 1923 novel *Porgy* by DuBose Heyward about a disabled beggar in a fictitious black community in the southern United States. There were complaints that the plot, with its poverty, drugs and violence, stereotyped the black community, but the black poet Langston Hughes wrote that Heyward 'saw with his own white eyes wonderful poetic qualities in the inhabitants of Catfish Row'. Gershwin called it a 'folk opera', but 'decided against using original folk material because I wanted the music to be all of one piece. Therefore I wrote my own spirituals and folk songs'.

Jascha Heifetz, like Gershwin, was the son of Russian Jewish parents. He was born in Vilnius (now in Lithuania), and started to play the violin before the age of two. He performed the Mendelssohn concerto aged seven, and studied at the St Petersburg conservatory until the family moved to the United States in 1917 to escape the Russian revolution. At 18 he was the world's highest paid solo violinist, continuing his legendary career into the 1960s. Heifetz's virtuoso arrangements of songs from *Porgy and Bess* were written as encores for his recitals, and published in 1947.

Errollyn Wallen (1958–) *Three Songs*

Errollyn Wallen was appointed Master of The King's Music in 2025, making history as the first black person to hold this position. Wallen was born in Belize and grew up, playing her piano obsessively, in London and with her extended family in New York. She trained at dance schools in the UK and Dance Theater of Harlem at the same time as studying piano and viola going on to read Music at Goldsmiths and Cambridge. She founded her own group, Ensemble X, and its motto, ('We don't break down barriers in music... we don't see any'), sums up her free-spirited approach and eclectic musicianship.

Now one of the most widely-performed contemporary composers, Wallen's catalogue of compositions reflects a profound creativity that has led to world-wide acclaim. Her work ranges from operas (twenty-three to-date), to orchestral and chamber works, choral pieces and songs. Royal recognition is just the latest in a series of 'firsts' in a career in which she has been a leader in broadening the scope and inclusivity of classical music.

Until recently, Wallen spent much time in a lighthouse in the north of Scotland where 'the absolute quiet... revolutionised my working life'. A further move has taken her to Orkney (once home to another Master of The King's Music, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies) where, she says, the Orcadians are like the people of Belize, gentle and welcoming.

The Lake (2022) is a song cycle of five songs commissioned by Julien Van Mellaerts and Ema Nikolovska, and is a reflection and response to Schubert's final collection of songs. The words are by Wallen. North is a seascape that opens with an accompaniment of lapping waves and an evenly-paced melody with the timeless simplicity of a folk tune. Verse by verse, the accompaniment adds depth and energy, whilst the melody, from the same starting point, breaks out into increasingly rapturous melisma. *Timeless* is about night travel above the earth and consciousness where a dream consoles. *On the Mountain* was composed in the memory of Martin Luther King Jr.

Ernest Bloch (1880–1959) *Vidui (Contrition) from Baal Shem: Three Pictures of Hasidic Life*

Born in Geneva into a Jewish family, Ernest Bloch studied in Switzerland, Germany and France and travelled to the USA in 1916 for a conducting tour, remaining there to teach and compose. His style drew particularly on his Jewish heritage; an article in the *Musical Quarterly* of 1921 described its 'special quality, both traditional and venturesome, primitive and modern', with 'a favourable atmosphere of exaltation and sincerity'. He returned to Switzerland during the 1930s, when a rapidly spreading following led to Bloch festivals in London in 1934 and 1937 and the founding of the Ernest Bloch Society (president Albert Einstein). After the second world war he returned to the USA, to teach a generation of leading American musicians at the University of California at Berkeley.

Baal Shem, Three Pictures of Hasidic Life, written in 1923, takes its name from the *Baal Shem Tov*, (Master of the Good Name), the honorific title of Israel ben Eliezer (1698–1760), the Jewish mystic and healer regarded as the founder of Hasidic Judaism,

which sees music as a transcendent route to religious experience. Bloch doesn't use specific traditional Jewish melodies, but incorporates some of their features – the intense, ornamented line, modal and 'oriental' scale patterns, flexible rhythms and vocal, improvisatory character – into a classical framework.

Vidui, (*Contrition*), refers to the confessional section of the Yom Kippur liturgy. After a section of short, pleading phrases that will return at the end, the violin rises in increasingly impassioned steps from its lowest string to a *fortissimo* climax more than three octaves higher.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) *Erbarne dich from St Matthew Passion*

In 1735 Johann Sebastian drew up a family tree under the title, *The origins of the musical Bach family*. From the late sixteenth century, he listed six generations, including his own and his children's, and accounted for no fewer than 53 family members – eighteen belonging to his own generation alone. Almost all worked as musicians in the same area of eastern Germany, supporting each other professionally, looking after each other's children when necessary, and meeting for 'family visiting days' when they sang chorales and improvised rowdy part songs.

Bach's musical focus changed with his various employments. At first engaged primarily as an organist, he wrote chamber and instrumental works as court composer to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, before taking up his last and longest employment in 1723 at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, where the principal requirement was for weekly cantatas and special church and civic occasions. There that he worked on the longest and most complex of all his works – the St Matthew Passion, first performed on Good Friday 1727. Set in the midst of narrative recitatives and choruses, and chorales with their familiar melodies, the arias in Bach's passions pause the action for crucial moments of reflection. *Erbarne dich* (*Have mercy*) follows the scene of Peter's three-fold denial of Jesus.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*

Successful composers in the first quarter of the nineteenth century typically launched their careers through virtuoso performances, establishment positions at court, church or opera house, or private support from wealthy sponsors and patrons. For various social, artistic and personal reasons, none of these routes was open to Schubert. In spite of tireless work writing in every musical genre, he was at first little known beyond a comparatively small circle of friends and admirers, and there only as a writer of songs. From the mid-1820s, however, his reputation started to spread further, publishers took a wider interest in his music, and he was more in touch with leading performers in Vienna and beyond. One of these was the famous soprano Anna Milder-Hauptmann (1785–1838), who had created the role of Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and went on to sing in Mendelssohn's famous revival of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1829. Milder-Hauptmann had given the first performance of Schubert's *The Trout*, and Schubert designed a leading role for her in *Alfonso and Estrella*, an opera that never reached the stage in his lifetime. It was after her attempts to interest the Berlin opera house in his work, and at her request for a showpiece, that Schubert composed *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* (*The Shepherd on the Rock*). It was to be his last song, written just a month before his premature death.

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen is not simply a setting of a poem. It is carefully designed for vocal display with a strong element of theatricality introduced by the obbligato instrument (originally clarinet) that joins the voice and piano. Schubert has chosen verses from three poems, by two different poets, that allow him to mirror, in miniature, the three movements of an instrumental concerto.

The piano sets a lonely scene, before we are introduced to the shepherd, who plays a sweeping, pastoral melody and then sings longingly of his distant beloved. The tune is extended with yodelling leaps that echo between voice and accompaniment, as they do across the poet's landscape, and show off the singer's range and flexibility. The loneliness intensifies as Schubert switches to lines expressing joyless isolation, set as a sustained cantilena in the minor key. In the final section, optimistic lines from a third poem (*Spring will come*) are the cue for an ear-catching display of brilliant runs and leaps. A passage in 'dotted' rhythm mirrors a similar episode in the first section, adding musical coherence to the extrovert showiness with which the work ends.

Ralph Vaughan Williams *We'll to the Woods no more*

1 *We'll to the Woods no more*
We'll to the Woods no more
The laurels all are cut,
The bowers are bare of bay
That once the Muses wore.
The year draws in the day
And soon will evening shut:
The laurels all are cut
We'll to the woods no more.
Oh, we'll no more, no more
To the leafy woods away,
To the high wild woods of laurel
And the bowers of bay no more.

2 *Along the field*
Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
"Oh who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love."

And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

3 *The half-moon westers low*
The half-moon westers low, my love,
And the wind brings up the rain;
And wide apart we lie, my love,
And seas between the twain.

I know not if it rains, my love,
In the land where you do lie;
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love.
You know no more than I.

4 *In the morning*
In the morning, in the morning,
In the happy field of hay,
Oh they looked at one another
By the light of day.

In the blue and silver morning
On the haycock as they lay,
Oh they looked at one another
And they looked away.

5 *The sigh that heaves the grasses*
The sigh that heaves the grasses
Whence thou wilt never rise
Is of the air that passes
And knows not if it sighs.

The diamond tears adorning
Thy low mound on the lea,
Those are the tears of morning,
That weeps, but not for thee.

6 *Good-bye*
Oh see how thick the goldcup flowers
Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
That never are told again.
Oh may I squire you round the meads
And pick you posies gay?
– 'Twill do no harm to take my arm.
"You may, young man, you may."

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
'Tis now the blood runs gold,
And man and maid had best be glad
Before the world is old.
What flowers to-day may flower to-morrow,
But never as good as new.
– Suppose I wound my arm right round –
" 'Tis true, young man, 'tis true."

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
'Tis little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
"Perhaps, young man, perhaps."

Oh, look in my eyes, then, can you doubt?
– Why, 'tis a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
We might as well sit down.
– Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
Why must true lovers sigh?
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty, –
"Good-bye, young man, good-bye."

7 Fancy's knell

When lads come home from labour
At Abdon under Clee
A man would call his neighbour
And both would send for me.
And where the light in lances
Across the mead was laid,
There to the dances
I fetched my flute and played.

Ours were idle pleasures,
Yet oh, content we were,
The young to wind the measures,
The old to heed the air;
And I to lift with playing
From tree and tower and steep
The light delaying,
And flute the sun to sleep.

The youth toward his fancy
Would turn his brow of tan,
And Tom would pair with Nancy
And Dick step off with Fan;
The girl would lift her glances
To his, and both be mute:
Well went the dances
At evening to the flute.

Wenlock Edge was umbered,
And bright was Abdon Burf,
And warm between them slumbered
The smooth green miles of turf;
Until from grass and clover
The upshot beam would fade,
And England over
Advanced the lofty shade.

The lofty shade advances,
I fetch my flute and play:
Come, lads, and learn the dances
And praise the tune to-day.
To-morrow, more's the pity,
Away we both must hie,
To air the ditty,
And to earth I.

8 With rue my heart is laden

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

A E Housman (1859–1936), *A Shropshire Lad*

Deborah Pritchard
Liberty

John Donne

No Man Is an Island (1624) (from *Meditation 17*,
Devotions upon Emergent Occasions)

No man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the
main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the
less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a
manor of thy friends or of thine own were. Any man's
death diminishes me, because I am involved in
mankind. And therefore never send to know for
whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

Emma Lazarus
The New Colossus (1883)

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Dave Neita
Alight (2017)

The pure notes of your goodness reaches beyond the
target you intended
The pebble hit the spot you aimed for and the ripples
from there extended
Water will transmit the energy of your love
Air will transport your melody way up above As you
traverse the Earth
Beyond the place of your Birth
Beyond the customs of your time
Beyond the expectations others define
Boldly let your inspired fire be set alight and take the
world a-blazing
The global village will benefit from your talents and
purpose so amazing.

Errollyn Wallen
Timeless (from *The Lake*)

When I sing in the night
When I glide across oceans and stars
See the Northern Lights
Touch the Milky Way
I am timeless like the water
That will carry me home to the Lake
Where the souls of those who love do wait

When I sing in the night
When I glide across oceans and stars
See the Northern Lights
Touch the Milky Way
I am timeless like the water
That will carry me home
Home to the Lake

Errollyn Wallen
North

When the wind is in the north
When the mountains sigh
That is when I'll take my boat
And sail without a cause

I'll sail by night and think by day
I'll sail by night and think by day
I'll sail by night and think all day of
North

When the stars are beating fast
When the dark is light
That is when I'll steal my way
And I'll gird these spirits tight

I'll sail by night and think by day
I'll sail by night and think by day
I'll sail by night and think all day of
North

When I lighted this place
When I smelled the sea
I knew I'd be here again
It's where I want to be

Errollyn Wallen
On the Mountain

To the memory of Martin Luther King

He sits on the mountain
That's where you'll find him
All alone
He walks on the mountain of love
And what have I done?

I've led a blameless life
But have I had a dream?
On the mountain?

And I've waited so long
I've led a blameless life
But have I had a dream?
On the mountain?

And I've waited so long
And I've suffered so long
How we've suffered
And we've waited
And called out your name
And we pray for a sign
But these chains weigh us down
And we can't see your face
And these chains drag us down
And we're
All alone

He had a dream on the mountain top.
Where is that dream on the mountain top?
He had a dream that put hope, like a child's heart
Now he's gone

Words by Errollyn Wallen

J S Bach
Erbarme dich

Erbarme dich, mein Gott,
Um meiner Zähren willen!
Schau hier, Herz und Auge
Weint vor dir bitterlich.
Erbarme dich, mein Gott.

Have mercy, my God,
for the sake of my tears!
See here, before you
heart and eyes weep bitterly.
Have mercy, my God.

Franz Schubert

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh',
In's tiefe Tal hernieder seh',
Und singe,

Fern aus dem tiefen dunkeln Tal
Schwingt sich empor der Widerhall
Der Klüfte.

Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,
Je heller sie mir wieder klingt
Von unten.

Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir,
Drum seh'n' ich mich so heiß nach ihr
Hinüber.

In tiefem Gram verzehr ich mich,
Mir ist die Freude hin,
Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich,
Ich hier so einsam bin.

So sehnend klang im Wald das Lied,
So sehnend klang es durch die Nacht,
Die Herzen es zum Himmel zieht
Mit wunderbarer Macht.

Der Frühling will kommen,
Der Frühling, meine Freud',
Nun mach' ich mich fertig
Zum Wandern bereit.

Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827)
Stanzas 5 and 6 by Karl August Varnhagen von Ense
(1785–1858)

The Shepherd on the Rock

When I stand on the highest rock,
Look down into the deep valley
And sing,

From far away in the deep dark valley
The echo from the ravines
Rises up.

The further my voice carries,
The clearer it echoes back to me
From below.

My sweetheart lives so far from me,
Therefore I long so to be with her
Over there.

Deep grief consumes me,
My joy has fled,
All earthly hope has vanished,
I am so lonely here.

The song rang out so longingly through the wood,
Rang out so longingly through the night,
That it draws hearts to heaven
With wondrous power.

Spring is coming,
Spring, my joy,
I shall now make ready to journey.

English translation © Richard Stokes

Ruby Hughes

Former BBC New Generation Artist, winner of both First Prize and Audience Prize at London's 2009 Handel Singing Competition, Ruby also holds a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and was shortlisted for a 2014 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award. Through her blossoming catalogue of recordings and lovingly curated performances, she has become known for her interpretations of the music of the baroque and 20th and 21st Century.

Given her background and her wide range of interests, it comes as no surprise that Ruby is a passionate programmer, curator and collaborator. She has forged particularly close relationships with artists such as Laurence Cummings, Joseph Middleton, Jonas Nordberg, Natalie Clein and Julius Drake, Huw Watkins, United Strings of Europe, The Manchester Collective and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. In the 2023/24 season she was invited to curate and perform in a series of three concerts for BBC Northern Ireland as well as to present Inside Music for BBC Radio 3.

Ruby's captivating capacity for communication and connection with audiences has led to invitations to perform at Wigmore Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Palais Garnier and Philharmonie de Paris and in the US at both the Frick Collection and Carnegie Hall, New York. Festival appearances have included the BBC Proms, Cheltenham, Edinburgh International, Newbury, Aldeburgh, Aix en Provence, Gent Festival OdeGand, Göttingen, Marlboro and Spitalfields. She has worked with a host of conductors including Rinaldo Allesandrini, Ivor Bolton, Laurence Cummings, Thierry Fischer, Pablo Heras Casado, Jun Markl, Juanjo Mena, Gianandrea Noseda, Marc Minkowski, Hervé Niquet, Thomas Søndergård, John Storgårds and Osmo Vänskä.

On the opera stage Ruby has sung productions for Theater an der Wein (Roggiero in Rossini's *Tancredi*, and Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Aix-en-Provence Festival (Euridice in *L'Orfeo*), Opéra de Toulon (Rose Maurrant in *Street Scene*) and Potsdamer Winteroper (title role in *Theodora*) and in the UK has performed major roles with English National Opera, Garsington Opera and for Scottish Opera.

Ruby's vibrant discography continues to grow and includes solo recital recordings for major independent labels such as BIS, Chandos, Delphian and Hyperion. Her first solo orchestral disc is a tribute to Giulia Frasi, Handel's lyric muse. (OAE Laurence Cummings Chandos records).

Recorded for BIS and dedicated primarily to female composers of the 17th century, *Heroines of Love & Loss* was released to huge critical acclaim, receiving a Diapason d'or award. *Clytemnestra*, the highly praised album of orchestral songs by Mahler, Berg and Rhian Samuel, in collaboration with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, received a nomination for a Gramophone Award. Ruby has recorded Mahler Symphony No. 2 with the Minnesota Symphony under Osmo Vänskä, a solo recital disc with Joseph Middleton titled *Songs for New Life and Love* including works by Mahler, Ives and Helen Grime and a programme with United Strings of Europe, featuring Golijov's *Three Songs for Soprano and String Orchestra*.

Recent releases include the critically acclaimed *Echo* with pianist and composer Huw Watkins and *End of my Days* with the Manchester Collective, which was record of the month in the *BBC Music Magazine* and received 5* in *The Times*.

Future recording projects for BIS include *Amidst the Shades* with lutenist Jonas Nordberg, and *Inheriting the Earth* with United Strings of Europe. A further recording with the Manchester Collective is due to be released later this year featuring a commission by Edmund Finnis together with Britten's *Les Illuminations*. This programme was rapturously received whilst on tour in the UK in 2023.

Ruby's passion for performing new repertoire has also led to her becoming a champion of female composers. Pieces by Helen Grime, Deborah Pritchard, Judith Weir and Errolyn Wallen have been commissioned for her.

Recent and upcoming highlights include (Britten's *Les Illuminations*) with Orchestre d'Auvergne under Christian Zacharias, (Rückert Lieder) with the Residente Orkest under Jun Märkl, Mahler 2 also with the Residente Orkest with Anja Bihlmaier and the Ulster Orchestra under Daniele Rustinoi, Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* with the Manchester Collective and Mozart programmes with Orchestre de Picardie and Orchestre National de Lille.

Baroque performances include a solo baroque programme with Potsdam Kammerakademie, recitals with Fretwork in Brecon, Bath and the Lake District, Messiah with La Chapelle Harmonique and Handel's *Israel in Egypt* for the Göttingen Handel Festival under Klaus Stok.

Ruby performed the world premiere of Helen Grimes' *It will be Spring Soon* with Musica Vitae and Malin Broman in Sweden and this season she will perform its UK premiere on tour with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Pekka Kuusisto.

Tamsin Waley-Cohen

British-American violinist Tamsin Waley-Cohen is known for her visceral and deeply expressive performances in repertoire spanning six centuries. With musical storytelling central to her approach, she has gained a reputation for her 'undeniably-fabulous playing' (*Classical Source*) and poetic performances that go straight to the heart. In addition to concerts with the Royal Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Hallé, Liverpool Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, Royal Northern Sinfonia and BBC Orchestras, amongst others, she has twice been associate artist with the Orchestra of the Swan and worked with conductors including Andrew Litton, Vasily Petrenko, Ben Gernon, Ryan Bancroft and Tamás Vásáry.

Her duo partners include James Baillieu, Huw Watkins, Cordelia Williams and George Fu. She is thrilled to be a Signum Classics Artist, for whom she has recorded over 10 albums to great critical acclaim 'her interpretation is technically beyond reproach and musically imaginative' (*Gramophone*). With her sister, composer Freya Waley-Cohen, and architects Finbarr O'Dempsey and Andrew Skulina, she held an Open Space residency at Aldeburgh, culminating in the 2017 premiere of *Permutations* at the Aldeburgh Festival, an interactive performance artwork synthesising music and architecture. Her love of chamber music led her to start the Honeymead Festival, now in its 17th year, from which all proceeds go to support local charities.

Her interest in working with living composers and the music of today has led to premieres of works written for her by composers including Oliver Knussen, Huw Watkins, Dobrinka Tabakova, Freya Waley-Cohen, Richard Causton, Joseph Phibbs, Richard Blackford and Deborah Pritchard, amongst others. Upcoming projects include premiering new works by Erkki-Sven Tüür, Misha Mullov-Abbado and Gavin Higgins at festivals and venues including the Aldeburgh Festival, Lammermuir Festival, the Two Moors Festival and Wigmore Hall, as well as celebrating 40 years of Kurtág's *Kafka Fragments* with a number of performances with soprano Claire Booth. She will also be joining Manchester Camerata in September for a world premiere a new concerto by Nick Martin, inspired by the work of sculptor Dame Barbara Hepworth.

She was the UK recipient of the ECHO Rising Stars Awards, touring all the major concert halls of Europe. She has also toured Japan, China and New Zealand and made her North American New York, San Francisco and Washington debuts. She was a founding member of the Albion string quartet, and appeared regularly with them at venues including Wigmore Hall, Aldeburgh Festival, and the Concertgebouw.

She is Artistic Director of the Two Moors Festival and has previously been Artistic Director of the Music Series at the Tricycle Theatre, London, and the Bargello festival in Florence. She studied at the Royal College of Music and her teachers included Itzhak Rashkovsky, Ruggiero Ricci and András Keller.

Huw Watkins

Huw Watkins was born in Wales in 1976. He studied piano with Peter Lawson at Chetham's School of Music and composition with Robin Holloway, Alexander Goehr and Julian Anderson at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. In 2001 he was awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, he now teaches composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

As a pianist, Huw is in great demand with orchestras and festivals including the London Sinfonietta, Britten Sinfonia, the BBC orchestras and Aldeburgh and Cheltenham Festivals. He has performed globally at concert halls including at the Barbican, the Wigmore Hall, the Library of Congress in Washington and the Smithsonian Institute. Strongly committed to the performance of new music, Huw has given premieres of works by Alexander Goehr, Tansy Davies, Michael Zev Gordon and Mark-Anthony Turnage. He recently presented a programme of Hans Werner Henze's piano works at the BBC's *Total Immersion* day at the Barbican. UK recent appearances include Newbury and Peasmarsh Festivals, Wigmore Hall, Eaton Square, Kettle's Yard Cambridge, Saffron Walden, Glasgow, Bath. Further afield, Ferrara, Columbus (USA) with ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, Domaine Forget and Toronto Summer Music Festival.

A favourite partner for chamber collaborations, Huw performs regularly with his brother, Paul Watkins, as well as Alina Ibragimova, James Gilchrist, Daniel Hope, Nicholas Daniel, Sebastian Manz, Mark Padmore, Carolyn Sampson and Alexandra Wood. Recently Huw has featured as both Composer in Residence and pianist at festivals including Presteigne and Lars Vogt's *Spannungen* Festival in Heimbach, Germany, as well as with the Orchestra of the Swan (2012-14).

Huw is one of Britain's foremost composers and his music has been performed throughout Europe and North America. Huw's works have been performed and commissioned by the Nash Ensemble, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Belcea Quartet, Elias Quartet, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra. Highlights include his acclaimed Violin Concerto premiered at the BBC Proms by Alina Ibragimova and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by

Edward Gardner, Piano Concerto premiered by BBC NOW, London Concerto premiered to mark the London Symphony Orchestra's centenary, Double Concerto premiered at the BBC Proms with BBC NOW conducted by Jac van Steen and *In My Craft of Sullen Art* for tenor and string quartet premiered at the Wigmore Hall by Mark Padmore and the Petersen Quartet.

Huw was Composer-in-Association with BBC NOW for three years 2015-2018.

Huw is regularly featured on BBC Radio 3, both as a performer and as a composer. His recordings include a disc of Mendelssohn's cello and piano works with his brother Paul Watkins (Chandos), British sonatas for cello and piano with Paul Watkins (Nimbus), Alexander Goehr's piano cycle *Symmetry Disorders Reach* (Wergo), and Thomas Adès' song cycle *The Lover in Winter* with the countertenor Robin Blaze (EMI Classics). Most recently NMC Records have released a disc dedicated to Huw Watkins' work entitled *In my craft of sullen art*. The disc showcases Huw's 'outstanding pianism' (Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*) and reveals him as 'one of the most rounded composer-musicians in the UK' (Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*).



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Paddington Trio

Stephanie Tang piano • **Tuulia Hero** violin • **Patrick Moriarty** cello

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Young Artists Recital 2

Ravel Trio in A minor

Shostakovich Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67

Having started their first adventure together at the Paddington Station in 2020, a year after they met, the Trio won the First Prize in the 70th Royal Over-Seas League Competition for Strings & Piano Ensemble. Since then, they have won First Prize and special prizes at the Parkhouse Award in Wigmore Hall, Schumann-Kammermusikpreis Frankfurt, Joseph Joachim International Chamber Music Competition, Triomphe de l'Art International Competition, Storioni Concours, Schiermonnikoog Festival Audience Award and the NEW FORMATS Project Prize. They are currently generously supported by the Britten Pears Arts, City Music Foundation, Kirckman Concert Society and GBZ Management. In the summer of 2023 the Trio completed an Artist Fellowship programme at their alma mater, the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, and continues to teach and inspire young ensembles through the Chamber

Fellowship Programme at the Royal Northern College of Music into the 2025/26 semester.

In March 2023, the Paddington Trio made its concerto debut performing the Beethoven Triple Concerto with Jan Söderblom and the Jyväskylä Symphony Orchestra in Finland. They have appeared in prominent halls and series, such as Wigmore Hall, King's Place, Bridgewater Hall, Alte Oper Frankfurt and the BBC Total Immersion. Their most recent international debuts saw them at the TivoliVredenburg, Schiermonnikoog Festival (NL), Buxton International, Brighton and Oxford Chamber Music Festivals (UK), Festival Flanders Ghent (BE) and Internacional Festival Cervantino (MX). The Trio has appeared on Klara (BE), RTÉ lyric fm (IE), YLE Radio (FI) and BBC Radio 3: In Tune (UK).

Tuulia, Patrick and Stephanie have had the privilege to work closely with internationally renowned musicians, such as Alfred Brendel, Eberhard Feltz, Marc Danel, Gary Hoffman, Anthony Marwood, Robert Levin, Johannes Meissl, David Dolan and members of the Emerson, Alban Berg, Èbène, Takács, Chilingirian and Meta4 quartets. They are ensemble-in-residence at the Reina Sofia International Institute of Chamber Music under Günter Pichler and they also receive mentorship from European Chamber Music Academy (ECMA), ChamberStudio and the Netherlands String Quartet Academy (NSKA). The trio studied under Thomas Adès at the IMS Prussia Cove's 50th anniversary masterclasses.

Recent highlight engagements in 2025 include Wigmore Hall, King's Place, Chipping Campden Music Festival, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, and return festival appearances in West Cork and Kuhmo festivals. Upcoming engagements include debuts at the Alte Oper Frankfurt, Britten-Pears Arts, Lucerne Chamber Music Society, Amsterdam Concertgebouw Sunday Morning Concerts, and Lavaux Classic, Newbury Spring, West Wicklow, and Shostakovich Gohrisch Festivals. The trio will release its much anticipated debut album "Freakshow" with PENTATONE in the first quarter of 2027.

Tuulia plays on a 1676 Goffriller violin, generously on loan from the Beare's International Violin Society.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Trio in A minor

- 1 Modéré
- 2 Pantoum. Assez vif
- 3 Passacaille. Très large
- 4 Finale. Animé

Please see page 159 for a note on this work.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67

- 1 Andante – Moderato
- 2 Allegro con brio
- 3 Largo
- 4 Allegretto

Dmitri Shostakovich was the most important twentieth-century Russian composer to work exclusively under the Soviet regime. He shot to prominence at an early age with his brilliant first symphony (1924–5) and the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1930–34), which received nearly two hundred performances before Stalin's displeasure led to a sudden reversal. Under the headline 'Muddle instead of Music', the party newspaper *Pravda* branded the score as '*coarse, primitive and vulgar*'. The less modernist and powerfully emotional Fifth Symphony, which followed in 1937, satisfied officialdom as well as scoring a tremendous success with the public. However, Shostakovich continued to walk a tightrope in his relations with the Soviet authorities. He received honours from the state, including a Stalin Prize for the second Piano Trio, but still suffered the draconian denunciation of the 1948 'Zhdanov decree', when most of his works were banned and there was an ever-present threat of arrest.

Work on a piano trio 'on Russian folk themes' had started in autumn 1943, and had not progressed far when Shostakovich learnt of the death of one of his closest friends, Ivan Sollertinsky, a musician, polymath and lifelong inspiration. '*My grief,*' he wrote, '*is eating away at my whole being... it seems as if I shall never be able to write another note.*' The Trio was eventually finished in August 1944. It is both a memorial dedicated to Sollertinsky and a universal expression of wartime themes of loss, memory and resilience.

The Trio opens with the eerie whistling of extremely high cello 'harmonics', playing a fugal theme that moves into the middle range of the violin and then into the lowest depths of the piano. The spare textures continue as the rhythms gather momentum, with angular, aggressive figures interspersed with echoes of rustic dances or nursery tunes. In an open-ended structure, the music runs inconclusively down to a quiet ending.

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The second movement is a picture of Ivan Sollertinsky. Shostakovich described his impressions on their first meeting: *'uncommonly merry, simple, brilliantly witty and entirely down-to-earth'*. Sollertinsky's sister considered this irrepressible scherzo as *'an amazingly exact portrait'* of her brother. One of its high-spirited figures – a little four-note 'turn' in the melody – will become increasingly important in the work.

The Largo brutally shatters the energetic mood, with eight slow, grim chords in the piano that will be repeated as a 'passacaglia'. Six repetitions grind their way through the movement, under a sustained lament shared by violin and cello, which recalls Sollertinsky in an elegiac version of the four-note 'turn' from the Scherzo. By the end of the movement, what started as personal feelings have taken on a wider context. As the music segues into the final Allegretto, the pulse of a Jewish-style dance emerges, first in shadowy pizzicato and then in massive textures, with the fierce energy of a 'danse macabre' – a passage that has been read as Shostakovich's response to the fate of Jews under the Nazis. A piano cadenza signals a change of focus, and the rest of the movement is spent recalling the main ideas of the whole work – starting with the fugal theme from the opening movement, and ending with the eight solemn chords of the passacaglia, which at last now find a harmonic resolution.

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Tuulia Hero

Tuulia Hero is an award-winning concert violinist and chamber musician, as well as an accomplished improviser and educator currently based in London. Originally from Finland, Tuulia was trained in violin from the age of 4 and brought up at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, the Hanns Eisler School of Music in Berlin and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Playing a Stradivarius violin from 1707, generously lent to her by the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Tuulia is the 2024 artistic grant recipient of the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation in Finland. Tuulia gave her debut in 2012 at the Kauniainen International Music Festival and has since been invited to perform at the Presidential Palace in Finland, Wigmore Hall in London, Konzerthaus in Berlin, and numerous festivals and concerts around Europe, North America and Eastern Asia.

Stephanie Tang

A native of Los Angeles, Stephanie Tang performed in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall at the age of 12 and has since then performed in major venues such as Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles), Shenzhen Concert Hall, Himalayan Concert Hall (Shanghai), Sendai Concert Hall, venues throughout the Netherlands, Place Flagey (Brussels), Wigmore Hall, Barbican Centre, Milton Court (London), Banff Centre, and Koerner Hall (Toronto). Most recently, Stephanie won Guildhall School's most distinguished award, the Gold Medal, and in the past she has won 1st prize at the Young Pianists' Beethoven Competition, 2nd prize at Louisiana International Piano Competition and the Jury's Discretionary Prize at the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Bronislaw Kaper Awards.

Patrick Moriarty

Cellist Patrick Moriarty is one of Ireland's foremost musicians and is in high demand as a soloist and as a chamber musician. Patrick has performed in venues across Europe such as Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, Victoria Hall, Muziekgebouw, Musiikkitalo, IMS Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music, West Cork Chamber Music Festival, and GAIA Music Festival. He has won numerous competitions and prizes such as the 70th Royal Over-Seas League Competition and the prestigious Parkhouse Award in Wigmore Hall. Recording work includes working with The Abbey Road Studios Institute as well as multiple recordings for BBC3, RTE lyric FM, YLE and VPRO.

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Romano Viazzani Ensemble

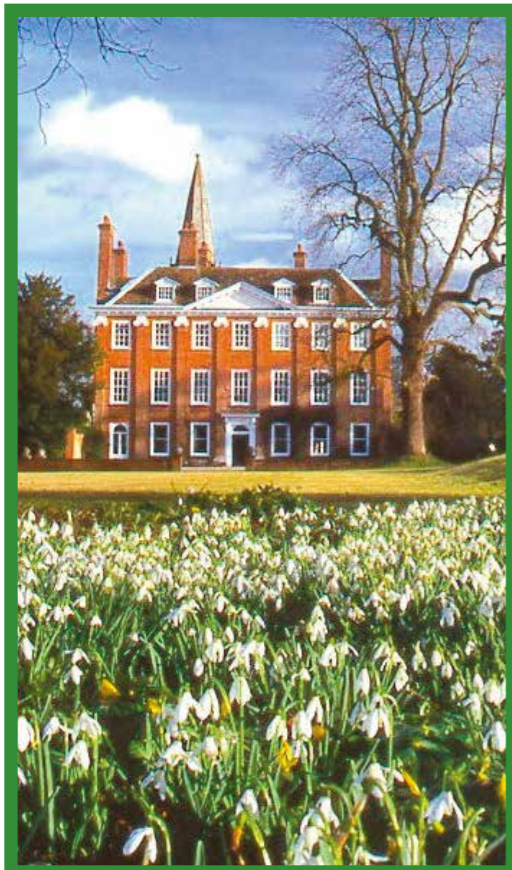
Romano Viazzani accordion / bandoneon • **John Bailey** piano • **Nick Pini** double bass
Philippa Mo violin • **Kieran Gunter** guitar • **Jacqui Tate** vocalist
Guillermo Rozenthuler vocalist • **Laura Lorenzi** dancer • **Leo Di Coco** dancer

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|-----------------------|--|
| Piazzolla | <i>Libertango</i> |
| Gardel | <i>Por una cabeza</i> |
| Rodriguez | <i>La Cumparsita</i> |
| Piazzolla | <i>Milonga para tre</i> |
| Piazzolla | <i>Muerte del Angel</i> |
| Piazzolla | <i>Oblivion</i> |
| Viazzani | <i>Swing a left off Waltz Street to Tango Gardens please Cabby</i> |
| Viazzani | <i>Barimar in London</i> |
| Piazzolla | <i>Vuelvo al Sur</i> |
| Piazzolla | <i>Yo soy Maria</i> |
| INTERVAL | |
| Gade | <i>Jealousy</i> |
| Viazzani | <i>London Tango</i> |
| Gardel | <i>Volver</i> |
| Villoldo | <i>El Choclo</i> |
| Piazzolla | <i>Escualo</i> |
| Garello | <i>Buenos Aires Conoce</i> |
| Viazzani | <i>Getaway Car</i> |
| Viazzani | <i>Terminal Tango</i> |
| Scarpino / Caldarella | <i>Canaro en Paris</i> |



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The Romano Viazzani Ensemble brings together seven outstanding musicians from the worlds of classical, jazz and Latin-American music to play and create tango and tango inspired music. Based on the line up of Astor Piazzolla's famous quintet they recreate music that ranges from Piazzolla's own works to classic Argentine and European tango. They also arrange music in the style of tango and write their own original tango-inspired music with a twist of swinging London.

The London-based ensemble officially started in 2009 and have played in the UK and Italy and after a gap of a few years when Romano Viazzani was involved in other projects, were brought together for an event in 2017 which led to their official relaunch in March 2018. Since then, the ensemble has gone from strength to strength culminating in its 2020 debut album *London Tango*.

Romano Viazzani

Accordionist Romano Viazzani was bandleader and arranger of L'Orchestra Rara and The High Society Dance Orchestra for many years and during this time he composed several soundtracks for TV including the BAFTA nominated documentary *Stranger at the Gate* (BBC2). His solo career has included many concerts and in 2001 he composed and performed his composition Valceno – Concerto for Accordion and Orchestra with the BBC Concert Orchestra which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. He has also played with the Royal Liverpool Symphony Orchestra as well as their chamber orchestra the 10-10 Ensemble. For five years he played the award-winning Gilad Atzmon and the Orient House Ensemble, appearing at venues such as Leipzig Opera House, Hamburg Opera House, Barbican Hall (London), the Queen Elizabeth Hall (London) as well as on TV and Radio broadcasts in the UK most recently with Bryn Terfel on the BBC1's *Andrew Marr Show*, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Greece and Romania. He has recorded many albums, written many songs and other music and has appeared in many musical theatre shows such as *Fiddler on the roof*, *Songs from a hotel bedroom*, *Piaf*, *The accordionist* and *She Loves Me* and has worked extensively in cabaret with Gregory Moore, Steve Ross, Joanna Strand, Jacqui Tate, Frances Ruffelle, Gabrielle Ducombe, Eliza Doolittle amongst others. In the Rock and Pop world he has worked with Phil Manzanera (Roxy Music) and Grace Jones and with Palestinian crooner Omar Kamal.

Nick Pini

Nicholas Pini is the black sheep of the Pini family musical dynasty, wandering off-piste at an early age to explore different genres of music. After studying jazz performance at Trinity College of Music he has continued to enjoy a career playing and arranging for many different artists, from Folk/Americana artists such as Laura Marling, Ethan Johns and Nick Mulvey to Jazz musicians Jonathon Gee and Will Butterworth as well as MD'ing for Broadway singer Ramin Karimloo with his Broadgrass project.

John Bailey

John Bailey has played in the best jazz clubs in London: The Pizza Express Jazz Club Soho, The Boisdale, The Pheasantry, The Vortex and in New York at 54 Below, Feinstein's and The Carlyle as well as others in France, Spain, Romania and Croatia. John has worked professionally as a jazz pianist, musical director, accompanist, arranger and composer since moving to London and training at Guildhall School of Music, completing a postgraduate master's in jazz performance. He has been commissioned to write original music for classical trio, jazz/classical septet and jazz big band and has recently completed an FRSM in classical piano performance achieving distinction.

Philippa Mo

Philippa studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing and performs extensively as a soloist worldwide. Solo tours have taken her to Australia, Brazil, China, Turkey Mongolian and Kazakhstan. She is a member of UPROAR Wales New Music Ensemble.

Concerto appearances include Piazzolla's Four Seasons, Leeds, McCabe's *Les Martinets Noirs*, Sweden, Dvorak Concerto, Exeter Cathedral and Colin Riley's *Stream-Shine*, Ely Cathedral.

Philippa has released critically acclaimed recordings for NMC, Dutton and Nimbus labels. Awarded Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, she won the Future Classic Women Awards 2020. She is represented by Agrippina Concert Agency in Germany and is Artistic Director of the Richmond Chamber Orchestra in Yorkshire.

Kieran Gunter

Kieran Gunter is an up-and-coming British jazz guitarist residing in London. His influences as a guitarist come from many sources including traditional jazz guitar, contemporary jazz guitar, Brazilian music and classical guitar.

Kieran co-runs the exciting jazz fusion quintet Glebe with pianist Chris Bland. Glebe released their debut album *Gaudí* in January 2025.

Tracks from *Gaudí* were played on national radio stations including BBC Radio 3 and Jazz FM and were streamed from all around the world.

Apart from performing with The Romano Viazzani Ensemble, Kieran performs regularly with musicians such as Freddie Benedict (*BBC Proms*), Victoria Fox (*Fawlty Towers*), Sarah Goodwin (*The Voice*), Leopold Benedict (*Call the Midwife*), The Denmark Street Big Band and Sabrina Carter (*Wicked*).

Jacqui Tate

Jacqueline Tate was born in Hong Kong and trained in vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music and the London School of Musical Theatre. She has made numerous jazz and cabaret appearances in London and New York, as well as Edinburgh and Glastonbury festivals. Jacqueline's West End musical theatre credits include *Les Misérables*, *Avenue Q*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*, and she has toured both the UK and internationally in *Avenue Q*, *My Fair Lady*, *Evita*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Merry Widow* and the Broadway transfer of *South Pacific*. She has appeared in concert with the London Symphony Orchestra and most recently at Cadogan Hall with the Alex Parker Orchestra.

Guillermo Rozenhuler

Guillermo was born in Buenos Aires. Since arriving in the UK in 2000, Guillermo has performed extensively as a solo artist and with numerous ensembles across Great Britain, specialising in Tango and Latin American music.

As a tango singer, he regularly performs and records with three respected European tango projects: the London Tango Orchestra (UK), Sexteto Cristal (Germany), and ReTango! (Poland). His recordings include *Primeros Pasos* (2014) and *Abrazo Abierto* (2021) with the London Tango Orchestra, and *Viento del Norte* (2018) and *Loca de Amor* (2019) with Sexteto Cristal. He has also collaborated as a guest vocalist with Cuarteto Rotterdam, and recorded with Tango Siempre on the album *Malandras del Tango*. He toured the UK for two years with the acclaimed show *Midnight Tango*, starring Vincent and Flavia of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Beyond tango, his UK career highlights include touring and recording with the acclaimed Orient House Ensemble (Musik and The Promised Band), releasing two albums with his Latin band Rioplatenses (*The Blue Hour* and *A Route to the Roots*), and taking a featured solo role in Pete Churchill's modern oratorio *The Journey* at the Royal Albert Hall

Laura Lorenzi

Internationally acclaimed Argentine tango and contemporary dancer and choreographer with over ten years of experience performing, teaching, and creating worldwide. Celebrated for expressive artistry, precision, and a distinctive fusion of tango's emotional depth with contemporary innovation. A guest lecturer at leading institutions – The Place (London), Central School of Ballet, and the Beijing Dance Academy – and featured in a short film directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Mike Figgis. Dedicated to pushing the boundaries of tango while honouring its tradition, delivering performances that captivate audiences through authenticity, musicality, and storytelling.

Leo Di Coco

Leo Di Coco is an Argentine tango dancer and choreographer celebrated for his commanding stage presence and theatrical artistry. With extensive experience performing in theatre productions, festival galas and dedicated tango shows, he specializes in crafting emotionally driven performances that blend classic salón technique with dramatic staging. As a headlining artist, Leo has led ensemble pieces and solo turns, collaborated closely with live musicians and directors, and choreographed full-length stage works that translate social tango into polished theatrical narratives.

Simon Johnson

Simon Johnson organ

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Simon Johnson became Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral in September 2021, following 13 years as the Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral. He was involved in all of the national occasions that took place at St Paul's during this time, playing for Her Majesty the Queen, the Dalai Lama, as well as numerous Prime Ministers and Archbishops.

An active recital schedule takes him regularly to the USA, as well as to many of the great venues in Europe. As a director he became well-known for establishing the reputation of the St Albans Abbey Girls' Choir. He has also performed with groups such as the LSO, RPO, and The Sixteen, recorded for Decca, Hyperion and Chandos, been published by OUP and Peters, collaborated with NASA and the International Space Station, and worked on the Oscar-winning soundtrack for *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

We are pleased to be presenting this evening recital in partnership with Douai Abbey.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
Heut' triumphieret Gottes Sohn (BWV 630)
Prelude and Fugue in C major (BWV 547)

Heut' triumphieret Gottes Sohn (Today the son of God is triumphant) concludes the Easter section of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* (*Little organ book*), an unfinished project started during his employment as court organist to the Dukes of Weimar, to write down a chorale prelude for every occasion in the church year. Bach's self-deprecating title heads a huge undertaking with a confidently didactic purpose: 46 chorales were completed out of a planned 164, 'in which a beginning organist receives given instruction as to performing a chorale in a multitude of ways while achieving mastery in the study of the pedal...' The melody of *Heut' triumphieret Gottes Sohn* was written in 1601 by Bartholomäus Gesius, setting verses by Kaspar Stolzhausen celebrating the resurrection. Bach surrounds the chorale with pealing bells, punctuated by striding pedal phrases.

Unlike the chorale preludes, none of Bach's employments, whether as organist at Weimar, chamber composer for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-

Cöthen or cantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig required him to write organ preludes and fugues, and he left no systematic collection or chronological account of his longer organ works. However, a stock of such works would have provided for his many visits as a consultant to test or advise on organs and organ-building, and for his occasional public recitals; and in any case, he seems to have composed simply from the abundance of his ideas and his determination to meet every musical challenge. The two movements of the C major Prelude and Fugue are both miracles of technical skill and architectural design, related in every bar to their principal subjects, but flexible and expansive in their overall structure. The theme of the Prelude, in a flowing compound triple meter, comprises three ideas (two of them featuring scale passages at different speeds) that weave their way on the manuals through every bar; the pedals pick out the harmonic structure, just focusing on the broken chord element of the theme.

William Byrd (1540–1623)
A Fancy

Through his compositions and teaching – much of it enshrined in the famous *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musick* by his pupil Thomas Morley – William Byrd was one of the most influential figures of Elizabethan music. During his 80 years, stretching from the reign of Henry VIII almost to the accession of Charles I, Byrd lived at the crossroads of England's artistic, social and religious life. As a Catholic at a time when attendance at Church of England services was required by law, he managed to keep a foot in both camps, perhaps through Queen Elizabeth I's personal intervention. He was organist at the Chapel Royal and composed an immense amount of church music, both Anglican and Latin. A royal patent gave him a monopoly on the printing of music and manuscript paper, and the Queen accepted the dedication of his first publication. He wrote vocal, chamber and keyboard music for leading aristocratic families, with whom he was closely enough connected to have apartments reserved for him in several stately homes.

This Fantasia in C is preserved in *My Ladye Nevell's Book*, a compilation of 42 of Byrd's keyboard compositions, copied by his admirer John Baldwin, a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor, very probably under Byrd's supervision. The dedicatee – probably a patron, skilled pupil, or both – has been identified as Lady Elizabeth Neville of Billingbear House, a Berkshire stately home destroyed by fire in 1924.

Thomas Morley called the Fancy, or Fantasia, 'the most principal and chiefest kind' of instrumental music, in which 'a musician taketh a point [theme] at his pleasure and wresteth and turneth it... In this may more art be shown than in any other music because the composer... may add, diminish, and alter at his pleasure'. Byrd opens with a closely worked 'point', imitated frequently between the polyphonic voices. In the following sections, the regular movement is overlaid with florid passages, and then new ideas are developed, illustrating the freedom that Morley describes, with 'bindings [ties] with discords, quick motions, slow motions, proportions and what you list'.

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)
Master Tallis's Testament

Like Elgar and Vaughan Williams, among others, Herbert Howells was a native of the 'Three Choirs Festival' counties, born in Lydney, Gloucestershire. He described his father as 'a very humble businessman for 6 days of 7, and a dreadful organist [at the local Baptist church] for the 7th day'. By the age of 11, Howells was unofficial deputy organist at the local parish church, and went on to become an articulated pupil of Herbert Brewer at Gloucester Cathedral, alongside Ivor Gurney and Ivor Novello. Like many of his generation, he studied at the Royal College of Music with Parry and Stanford, and returned to the College to teach from 1920 to 1979, as well as succeeding Holst as Director of Music at St Paul's Girls School. Although he subscribed to no faith, he contributed significantly to the twentieth-century repertoire of sacred choral and church music in works marked by their thoughtful spirituality.

Howells' restrained style, coloured after 1935 by grief over the death of his nine-year old son, reflects the English cathedral tradition through its modal polyphony, coloured with a very personal expressive chromaticism; Vaughan Williams described him as 'a reincarnation of a lesser Tudor luminary'. *Master Tallis's Testament*, composed in 1940, is an explicit tribute to one of the great Tudor composers – 'a footnote', in Howells words, to Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis*. Howells had heard that work, and met its composer, at its premiere in Gloucester in 1910 – an unforgettable formative experience for the aspiring 18-year-old. *Master Tallis's Testament* comprises a theme 'quasi lento, teneramente' in a gently flowing 6/8 metre, presented on manuals only, and two variations that build to a rich sonority. At the end, the final cadence is repeated softly and slowly as we return to the elegiac mood of the opening.

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

L'Ascension

- 1 *Majesté du Christ demandant sa gloire à son Père (The Majesty of Christ Demanding His Glory of the Father)*
- 2 *Alléluias sereins d'une âme qui désire le ciel (Serene Alleluias of a Soul that Longs for the Heavens)*
- 3 *Transports de joie d'une âme devant la gloire du Christ qui est la sienne (Outbursts of Joy From a Soul Before the Self-Fulfilling Glory of Christ)*
- 4 *Prière du Christ montant vers son Père (Prayer of Christ Ascending Towards His Father)*

Olivier Messiaen said 'I was born a believer. A number of my works are dedicated to shedding light on the theological truths of the Catholic faith. That is the most important aspect of my music'. To this central core he added a unique sound-world based on his own system of scales, the study of ancient and non-Western traditions of rhythm and melody, and a lifelong fascination with birdsong as a manifestation of divine beauty. His composing career stretched over seven decades from early works written in the 1920s during his studies at the Paris Conservatoire to his last years; his tenure of the post of organist at Église de la Sainte-Trinité (1931–1992) was almost as long. He was an inspirational teacher at the Conservatoire, where, as one student reported, his class 'looked at their great master with the eyes of dazzled rabbits'. Organ music forms a major part of his output, but he wrote extensively in other media, including the *Quartet for the End of Time* (written in 1940 in a prisoner of war camp in Germany and premiered on battered instruments to 400 inmates and guards).

As a result of his individual use of tonality and rhythm, Messiaen's music sounds like no-one else's. He explained his style in his book *Technique de mon langage musicale*, but emphasised that the aural imagination was paramount – he developed his personal style through creative work before his analysis of it uncovered its technical basis. Similarly, the listener's experience takes priority over technical investigation. But that experience can raise a lot of questions: do the sounds mean the same to a committed Catholic as they do to an agnostic? Do they evoke general moods, or is there some closer link between the doctrine and the music? More specifically, what gives the music a rhythmic and harmonic character so different from both Messiaen's predecessors and his contemporaries?

Messiaen's rhythms are written conventionally with time signatures and bar lines, but they are not driven by a sense of an underlying metre. Partly influenced by Indian traditions, they unfold flexibly as events of different lengths, rather than aiming at the next strong beat. His harmony is based on a personal

system of 'modes' involving symmetrical patterns of intervals. Melodies and harmonies derived from these scales can include sounds from traditional major and minor keys, but more often sound alien to them, partly because the interval of a diminished fifth – ironically, an interval avoided in medieval and Renaissance theory as 'diabolus (the devil) in musica' – appears very frequently in Messiaen's modes. Western music has exploited this interval to create forward movement by dissonance and resolution, but Messiaen's sweetly dissonant chords are static colours (literally, as he experienced synaesthesia) and step or float from one to another without anxiety.

L'Ascension is an early work, written in 1932–3 when Messiaen was in his mid-twenties. He arranged three movements for organ a year later, substituting a new third movement for the orchestral original. As well as the devotional titles, each movement is headed with a biblical or liturgical quotation and the underlying keynote of each movement ascends gradually, from E through F and F sharp to G. *Majesté du Christ* is headed with a quotation from St John's gospel: 'Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee'. Marked 'very slow and majestic', the music moves in broad chorale phrases of gradually increasing length, each starting quietly and culminating in a sustained major chord.

The *Alléluias sereins* are prefaced by a line from the Mass for Ascension Day: 'We beseech thee Almighty God for that we may in mind dwell in Heaven'. The movement opens with a single florid line – an individual voice initiating the appeal of the text; others join in a 'dawn chorus' of improvisatory song that becomes a shimmering texture of interweaving voices involving both hands and pedals.

St Paul provides the epigraph for 'Transports de joie': 'Giving thanks to the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light . . . has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'. The music pits thrilling outbursts from the manuals against massive pedal exclamations, urged on by repeated instructions – 'faster . . . faster . . .' – to an aerobic cadenza and a final chord of F sharp major.

The final movement brings us to the definitive moment of Ascension, with words of Jesus heading the score: 'And now O father I have manifested Thy name unto men and now I am no more in the world and I come to thee'. Phrases rise mysteriously upwards, and chant-like melodies sing above vibrant chords. Without changing its majestic pace, the music rises to a powerful conclusion, not on the G major chord that we would expect, but on its usual precursor, a 'dominant 7th' – as if the ascent will continue beyond human sight.

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Foyle-Štšura Duo

Michael Foyle violin • Maksim Štšura piano

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Beethoven Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24 *Spring*

Brahms Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 79 *Regensnate*

INTERVAL

Franck Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24 *Spring*

- 1 Allegro
- 2 Adagio molto espressivo
- 3 Scherzo: Allegro molto
- 4 Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Written in 1800 and published the following year as one of a pair of sonatas, this work was written when Beethoven was establishing himself as Vienna's foremost young composer. To his growing catalogue of piano sonatas, concertos and works for various chamber music groups he had recently added the first six string quartets and the first symphony, a comprehensive public demonstration of his mastery

of the principal genres and forms of contemporary instrumental music. A review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* approved of the 'strict order, clarity and craftsmanship' of the two sonatas.

The *Spring Sonata* was not so called by Beethoven, but it shares its key of F major and its varied, nature-inspired moods with the explicitly programmatic *Pastoral Symphony*. Beethoven loved nothing better than spending time in the countryside. The English composer Charles Neate, who accompanied him on evening walks, had never met a man who so enjoyed nature. At the time of writing this sonata, signs of deafness were already causing Beethoven anxiety; the inability to hear birdsong and country sounds was one of its most distressing early symptoms.

The sweeping lyricism of the opening Allegro is admirably suited to the violin, and quite different from the terse thematic mottos that Beethoven chose for his early piano sonatas. This theme (like others in the work) is even-handedly offered to both instruments, even though the violin is left with some uncomfortably pianistic accompanying figures. The piano's abrupt *fortissimo* variant of the opening, in bare octaves and in a wholly unexpected key, paves the way for the boldly accented second theme, which is equally weighted between the two instruments, and provides the starting point for a dramatic development section.

The intense stillness of the Adagio – opening, like the first movement of the *Moonlight* sonata, as a prototype *Nocturne* – serves as a reminder of the expressiveness that was a feature of Beethoven's own playing, as well as of his compositions. Czerny, his pupil, wrote that 'Beethoven's performance of slow and sustained passages produced an almost magical effect on every listener'. The theme returns in an elaborately ornamented form and then pursues an adventure to remote harmonic territory.

The mood of the Adagio is thoroughly blown away by the brief Scherzo, wickedly humorous in its rhythmic quirks – just as Beethoven is reported to have burst out laughing after an improvisation had reduced an audience to tears. The final Rondo is based around another broad and sinuous melody, with an abundance of secondary material in the intervening episodes. The central section is a strenuous affair of energetic triplets and striding syncopations, and the subsequent returns of the theme become increasingly decorative and flamboyant. In a final coup, a wholly new, though inevitable-seeming, tune appears, leading the movement serenely to the flurry of arpeggios with which it closes.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 79 *Regensonate*

- 1 Vivace ma non troppo
- 2 Adagio
- 3 Allegro molto moderato

Having been trumpeted to the world at the age of 20 by Robert Schumann as the great new hope for German music, Brahms took infinite pains to live up to the claim. Two milestones along the way feature in this year's Festival. The seeds of the deeply personal German Requiem (21 May), were sown a decade before it reached its final form. The First Symphony (16 May), with a mighty and almost overpowering tradition behind it, took Brahms over twenty years to complete to his satisfaction, before its first performance in 1876.

In an admiring review of the symphony, the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick expressed the caveat that Brahms 'seems to favour too one-sidedly the great and the serious... the difficult and the complex, at the expense of sensuous beauty'. In the event, the enthusiastic reception of the symphony broke through a barrier, and Brahms rapidly composed in its wake a series of more lyrical works, including the Second Symphony, the Violin Concerto and this Violin Sonata. All three were written at Pörtlach, a quiet spa on the Wörthersee in the countryside of southern Austria, where he spent three successive summers.

Brahms based the sonata on a pair of songs he had written a few years earlier, to words by Klaus Groth – *Regenlied* (*Rain Song*) and *Nachklang* (*Echo*). In *Regenlied*, the cascading rain awakens treasured memories of childhood innocence. In *Nachklang*, set to the same music, the rain becomes identified with the tears of experience. The sonata's opening theme, with its gently animated 'dotted-note' rhythm and characteristic falling contour, derives from the piano introduction to *Regenlied*. The motto rhythm reappears in every new melody, unifying the movement as an opening statement that will only be balanced by the arrival of the song itself in the Finale. A central development section opens with the theme high in the piano, and the piano's original sustained chords transferred (somewhat riskily) to droplets of violin pizzicato. Dramatic scenes ensue, and several premonitions of the main theme are needed before calm is restored in the recapitulation.

Brahms had kept up a close friendship with Clara Schumann and her family since Robert's death twenty years earlier, and explained that the slow movement of the sonata was written with his godson Felix Schumann in mind. Felix was Clara's youngest son, and a promising violinist, but his precarious health led to his death from tuberculosis at the age of 25, only a year after the sonata was written.

The sad, affectionate melody, unsettled by rhythmic syncopations, is presented first on the piano, and the violin responds with sighing gestures before taking up the theme. Contrasting with this is a dark episode of heavy chords and march-like tread, featuring a slow version of the 'dotted' rhythm from the first movement, and returning to end the movement in a hushed conclusion.

In the last movement, opening in the minor key, we finally hear the melody of the *Regenlied*, with its accompanying pitter-patter of semiquaver raindrops. Clara Schumann, with whom Brahms shared every new work, was enchanted: 'You can imagine my delight when in the third [movement] I rediscovered my so ardently beloved melody... I don't believe there is a single person who perceives this melody as joyously and as wistfully as I'. In this rondo structure, an episode unexpectedly brings back the melody from the second movement, while the continuous rain-like figuration continues in the accompaniment. Eventually the music turns to the home key of G major, in a mysterious coda haunted by memories of both previous movements.

César Franck (1822–1890)

Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano

- 1 Allegretto ben Moderato
- 2 Allegro – Quasi lento – Tempo I
- 3 Recitativo – Fantasia
- 4 Allegretto poco mosso

César Franck was born in Liège, in the French-speaking Walloon area of the Netherlands that, after the political turmoil of the Napoleonic period, became part of Belgium in 1830 – eight years after the composer was born. The debatable question of his 'nationality' is further complicated by the German ancestry of his mother (German was the language of his childhood). The prodigious gifts of both César and his younger brother Joseph suggested to his father Nicolas-Joseph the possibility of another Liszt in his own family, and Franck senior pushed his sons as hard as he could. César attended Liège conservatoire at eight, was a pupil-teacher before he was twelve, toured giving concerts in his early teens and took private lessons in Paris. Eventually Nicolas-Joseph took French citizenship – the only route by which his boys could enter the Paris Conservatoire. In his mid-twenties Franck struck out on his own path, defying his father over his courtship and marriage, taking on important positions as an organist and church musician, and turning his attention increasingly to composition. In 1871, during the Franco-Prussian war, Franck – together with Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Duparc and many other leading musicians – became a founding member of the *Société nationale de musique*, set up to promote French music and counter the still rising tide of German romanticism.

The following year he became a professor at the conservatoire, affectionately known to his students as 'Père Franck'.

Franck's Violin Sonata was written in 1886 as a wedding present for the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, who was presented with it on the morning of his wedding, and performed it later the same day during the ceremony. It is written in the 'cyclic form' that Franck favoured, in which themes recur and develop across different movements. The first movement acts as a quiet prelude, introducing a melody, falling through intervals of a third, that will be often referred to further on in the sonata. The second movement is on a bigger scale, with a passionate, swirling theme and ardent, lyrical second melody. A recitative that separates the sections prefigures the third movement, where freely-evolving violin recitatives alternate with fragments of remembered themes in the piano. Interspersed with mysterious quiet sections, we hear for the first time a bold theme in wide intervals, marked *dramatico*. In contrast with the freedom of the 'Fantasia', the finale is tightly organised, with a canonic theme, in which the violin follows the piano in strict imitation of its flowing melody. In the centre of the movement, the 'dramatico' theme sweeps in, before the opening melody returns, capped by a final acceleration into a peal of wedding bells.

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Foyle-Štšura Duo was formed in 2012 and won the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe Duo Competition and the Salieri-Zinetti International Chamber Music Competition in 2015.

Since then, the Duo has performed in venues such as Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Buckingham Palace, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, Usher Hall in Edinburgh, The Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, as well as for the St. Magnus International Festival, Grachtenfestival Amsterdam, New York Chamber Music Festival, Cervantino Festival in Mexico. Their performances have been broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, NPO Radio 4 and Estonian Klassikaraadio.

During the 2018–19 season, the Duo released two CDs, *The Great War Centenary: Janáček, Debussy and Respighi Sonatas* on Challenge Records and *Lutosławski and Penderecki: Complete Violin and Piano Works* on Delphian Records, both to critical acclaim ('delivered by both artists in sweeping style' – BBC Music Magazine, 'richly detailed and impassioned performances' – The Daily Telegraph, 'the duo delivers a dream debut, 10/10' – Luister, 'an extraordinary release, played phenomenally' – Stretto). Formerly Park Lane Group, Kirckman Concert, Making Music and Live Music Now artists,

receiving masterclasses from Stephen Kovacevich and Maxim Vengerov, they are now City Music Foundation Ambassadors. In 2020, the Duo recorded Beethoven's complete Sonatas for Piano and Violin to mark the composer's 250th anniversary. These CDs were released on Challenge Classics in 2020–22 and were praised by critics, including the five-star review for the cycle's final instalment in BBC Music Magazine.



Michael Foyle

Michael Foyle is proving to be a violinist of great class and elegance on the concert platform. His total commitment to the musical integrity of each score combines with a constant pursuit of beauty of expression, resulting in a powerful communication style that has won over audiences internationally.

Michael launched his career by winning The Netherlands Violin Competition 2016. His performance of Szymanowski's Violin Concerto No. 1 with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra led to an immediate invitation to give his debut recital in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

His London debut was followed with a recital at the Wigmore Hall ('superlative' – Seen and Heard International) and since then he has performed recitals in the UK's most prestigious venues, including Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Buckingham Palace, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Bridgewater Hall and Usher Hall, regularly being broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Recent concerto appearances include with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Mozart), English Chamber Orchestra (Prokofiev), Polish Baltic Philharmonic (Elgar), Youth Symphony Orchestra of Russia (Brahms) and a return to the Rotterdam Philharmonic (Korngold). He gives recitals at festivals worldwide, including St. Magnus International Festival, New York Chamber Music Festival, Grachtenfestival Amsterdam, and Cervantino Festival (Mexico).

Alongside his solo career, Michael is violinist of Trio Balthasar and Professor of Violin at the Royal

Academy of Music in London (the youngest appointed in the institution's 200-year history) and at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne. Michael plays a Gennaro Gagliano violin from 1750 on private loan.



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Maksim Štšura

Maksim Štšura is a pianist, educator and researcher currently based at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Tallinn. He completed his Postgraduate education at the Royal College of Music in London, also receiving his DMus there for a research project entitled "Translating Twenty-First Century Orchestral Scores for the Piano: Transcription, Reduction, and Performability." Maksim performs extensively as a soloist and chamber musician both in Estonia and internationally, with notable engagements in the United Kingdom.

Maksim earned his Bachelor's degree cum laude from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, where he studied under Ivari Ilja. He continued his Postgraduate education at the Royal College of Music in London, studying with Gordon Fergus-Thompson. Maksim also completed the Doctoral course at the RCM, receiving his DMus degree for a research project entitled Translating Twenty-First Century Orchestral Scores for the Piano: Transcription, Reduction, and Performability. In 2020, he was appointed Lecturer in Piano and Chamber Music at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Tallinn.

Maksim has participated in masterclasses with many distinguished pianists, including Dmitry Bashkirov, Stephen Hough, John Lill, Barry Douglas, Nina Seryogina, Veera Gornostayeva, Daniel Pollack, Tamás Ungár, and Eliso Virsaladze. He has also been recognized in several international competitions, winning First Prize at the 7th Estonian Piano Competition in 2008 and the Intercollegiate Beethoven Piano Competition in 2013. As a soloist, Maksim has performed with orchestras such as the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and Wiener Kammer-symphonie. Additionally, he serves as a Trustee of the Mills Williams Foundation.

Marti Webb

In Conversation with Edward Seckerson

By kind permission of Lord & Lady Lloyd Webber



Marti Webb is renowned for her leading roles in West End musicals. She gained prominence through performances in productions such as *Evita*, in which she played the role of Eva Perón from 1979, and *Tell Me on a Sunday*, a one-woman show specifically written for her by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Don Black.

Webb's career spans over five decades in musical theatre and recording, establishing her as one of Britain's most enduring stars in the genre. Her breakthrough came in the late 1970s with *Evita* at the Prince Edward Theatre, followed by acclaimed turns as Grizabella in *Cats*, Anna Leonowens in *The King and I*, and Mrs Johnstone in *Blood Brothers*.

In addition to stage work, she starred in the 1980 television adaptation of *Tell Me on a Sunday*, which propelled her to pop chart success with the single "Take That Look Off Your Face," reaching No. 3 on the UK Singles Chart.

We are delighted to be returning to Andrew Lloyd Webber's private theatre where writer, broadcaster and interviewer Edward Seckerson will be in conversation with Marti about her life and career.



Marti Webb

Marti Webb is one of Britain's most popular stars, having performed leading roles in numerous West End musicals, including *Stop the World I Want to Get Off*, *Half-a-Sixpence*, *Oliver*, *Godspell*, *The Card*, *The Good Companion*, *Evita*, *Song and Dance*, *Cats*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Tell Me On a Sunday*, *Blood Brothers* and *The Seven Deadly Sins* for the ENO.

In addition to the above, Marti has played leading roles in the touring productions of *Oliver*, *Evita*, *Goodbye Girl*, *Annie*, *The Kind and I*, *Tell Me On a Sunday*, *Hot Flush*, *Blood Brothers*, *Oklahoma* and *42nd Street*. She has also appeared in several pantomimes and four Royal Variety Performances.

Marti received critical acclaim for her unforgettable performance in *Tell Me On a Sunday* which was written for her by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Don Black, when it was televised as a Music Special for BBC2 in 1980. The album reached No. 1 and the single *Take That Look Off Your Face* reached No. 2 in the UK charts. She recreated her role as the first half of the hit West End show *Song and Dance* for which Marti was nominated for an Olivier Award. She received The Manchester Evening News Best Performance Award, as well as the TV Times Award for Best Female Singer, voted for by its readers.

Television includes *Great British Songbook* with Don Black (Sky Arts), *The Many Faces of Dame Judi Dench* (BBC4), *The History of British Musicals* (BBC4), *The Paul O'Grady Show* (ITV) and *Diamonds Are Forever* (BBC4), celebrating the work of Don Black.

Marti has recorded nine solo albums and had many hit singles including *Ben* (the royalties being donated to the Ben Hardwicke Fund) and *Always There*, the theme from the hit BBC series *Howard's Way*.

In recent years Marti has completed sell-out performances in the West End where she reprised her role in *Tell Me On a Sunday*, followed by a UK tour of *La Cage Aux Folles*, produced by Bill Kenwright, where she played Jacqueline.

In 2021 Marti joined the cast of Bill Kenwright's UK tour of *The Cat and the Canary*, playing Susan. More recently Marti has appeared in *A Murder has been Arranged*, as Mrs Arthur, *Blithe Spirit*, as Mrs Bradman, and *Calendar Girls – The Musical*, as Celia, at the Theatre Royal Windsor.



Edward Seckerson

Formerly Chief Classical Music Critic of The Independent, Edward Seckerson is a writer, broadcaster, podcaster and musical theatre aficionado. He wrote and presented the long-running BBC Radio 3 series *Stage & Screen*, in which he interviewed many of the biggest names in the business – among them Julie Andrews, Angela Lansbury, Liza Minnelli, Stephen Sondheim and Andrew Lloyd Webber. During his journalistic career he has written for most major music publications and is still on the panel of *Gramophone* magazine. He appears regularly on BBC Radio 3 and 4 and presented the 2007 series of the musical quiz *Counterpoint*. On television, he has commented a number of times at the *Cardiff Singer of the World* competition. He has published books on Mahler and the conductor Michael Tilson Thomas.

Edward conducted one of the last major interviews with Leonard Bernstein, and his audio podcast Sondheim – In Good Company proved a significant contribution to Sondheim's 80th birthday year. He originated a show entitled *Facing The Music* with the late great Dame Patricia Routledge, chronicling her little-known career in musical theatre, and continues to host his *Comparing Notes* and *Talking Point* series of conversations and live performances with stars of musical theatre at Crazy Coqs, the iconic cabaret room at Brasserie Zedel's. For Alex Fane Productions he has appeared with Dame Diana Rigg at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Broadway legend Patti LuPone at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. He has also devised two shows with Jason Carr – *Bernstein Revealed*, with Sophie-Louise Dann, and *Rodgers Revealed*, with Anna Francolini – which explore the life and work of Leonard Bernstein and Richard Rodgers respectively. *Bernstein Revealed* featured in the Bernstein 100 centenary celebrations at the Barbican and was performed elsewhere in 2018/19.

Around the World (of Gilbert & Sullivan) in 80 minutes

Charles Court Opera in concert

John Savournin compère and baritone • Ellie Neate soprano • Amy J Payne mezzo
William Morgan tenor • David Eaton piano

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Gilbert and Sullivan highlights
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Charles Court Opera, a favourite of the Festival, are celebrating their 20th anniversary with this special gala programme of scenes, duets and songs from the beloved Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Featuring CCO's very finest singers, this concert promises to be a very special occasion not to be missed!



John Savournin

John is considered one of the finest bass-baritones and directors of his generation. His range of roles have included Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Colline, (*La bohème*), Peter Quince (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Angelotti (*Tosca*) and Zuniga (*Carmen*). Well-known for his comedic ability on stage, he has also taken numerous roles in operetta and musical theatre including The Pirate King (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Captain Corcoran (*HMS Pinafore*), Sir Despard Murgatroyd (*Ruddigore*), Wilfred Shadbolt (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) and Second Gangster (*Kiss me, Kate*). He has performed regularly for English National Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera Holland Park, Grange Festival, Garsington Opera, Nederlandse Reisopera, the Land's End Ensemble (Canada) and the BBC Proms. With a keen interest in contemporary repertoire and an unusually wide vocal range, his roles have also extended to Duke / Judge / Hotel Manager (*Powder Her Face*), Fotis (*The Greek Passion*), The King (*8 songs for a Mad King*), amongst others. In high demand on the concert platform, his recent engagements have included Judas (*The Apostles*) at The Three Choirs Festival and Angel / Priest (*The Dream of Gerontius*) at Cadogan Hall.

As a director and theatre maker, John has created acclaimed productions both as Artistic Director of Charles Court Opera, and as a freelance director, divisor and writer. He was a finalist in the 'Rising Talent' category at the International Opera Awards 2022 for his directing work, and recent engagements include new productions of *The Merry Widow*, for which he has also written the script for a new translation, and *Trial by Jury*, both for Scottish Opera and Opera Holland Park in 2025, and reviving CCO's *The Magic Flute* at Wilton's Music Hall. His *Trial by Jury*, which has been nominated for a UK Theatre Award, can also be seen on Opera Vision. He is a passionate advocate for new work and making opera for young people, having created or directed many projects for RBO, Opera North, Opera Holland Park, BBC and CBBC, most recently directing *Dewi in the Deep* at RBO and creating a series of radio episodes with CBBC presenter Chris Jarvis. John is the new Artistic Director of Waterperry Opera Festival.



Ellie Neate

Ellie Neate trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Her operatic roles include First Daughter (*Akhnaten*), Celia (*Iolanthe*), cover Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*), cover Elsie Maynard (*The Yeomen of the Guard* – English National Opera), Papagena (*The Magic Flute Lite*), cover Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* – Opera North), Sylviane (*The Merry Widow* – Scottish Opera and Opera Holland Park) Lisa (*La sonnambula*), Elisa (*Il re pastore*), Cleopatra (*Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra* – Buxton Festival), Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*), Milica Svadba), Maria Bertram (*Mansfield Park* – Waterperry Opera Festival), Cunegonde (*Candide* – Blackheath Halls) and Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel* – BYO).

In concert she has performed at Oxford Lieder Festival, was broadcast live from the Wigmore Hall for the BBC, with the London Symphony Chorus at Barbican Hall, for ENO Does Eurovision, and recorded the soundtrack for the Disney+ television series *Rivals*.

Upcoming performances include Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) at Waterperry Opera Festival and Teatro Lorenzo da Ponte, Vittorio Veneto, and her studio opera recording debut as Lisette in *La Rondine* with Opera Rara and The BBC Symphony Orchestra in late 2025.



Amy J Payne

Described by Bachtrack in 2023 as 'one of the best comprimarios on the circuit', mezzo-soprano Amy J Payne has appeared as a guest artist with many of the UK's leading opera companies.



Opera season highlights in 24/25 include: Dame Carruthers (*The Yeomen of the Guard* – Opera Holland Park); Bobylkha (*The Snowmaiden*), Mezzo Soloist (*Do not take my story for a fairytale* – English Touring Opera); Olga (*The Merry Widow* – Scottish Opera); Ruth (*The Pirates of Penzance* – National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company). Next season, she will make her debuts at Welsh National Opera (*Old Lady, Candide*) and at Nederlandse Reisopera in the world premiere of Elena Langer's new comic opera: *To Die For*. She will also return to Opera North as June Spoon in *Pass the Spoon* by David Fennessy at Howard Assembly Room.

She has enjoyed a working relationship across operetta, opera and pantomime with Charles Court Opera for over a decade. Previous credits for CCO include: Third Lady (*The Magic Flute*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), Dame Hannah (*Ruddigore*), Lady Jane (Patience), Ruth (*The Pirates of Penzance*) and seven seasons of pantomime at The Rosemary Branch, The King's Head and Jermyn Street Theatres.



William Morgan

William Morgan trained at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio, and is a former Harewood Artist of English National Opera.

Opera and theatre work include Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance* – ENO), Camille (*The Merry Widow* – Scottish Opera & Opera Holland Park), Tamino (*The Magic Flute* – ENO, Scottish Opera), title role (*Candide*), Freddy Demuth (*Marx in London!*), Marco (*The Gondoliers* – Scottish Opera), Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress* – Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Theater Biel); Quint (*The Turn of the Screw* – ENO/The Open Air Theatre), Fairfax (*The Yeomen of the Guard* – Opera Holland Park), Anthony (*Sweeney Todd* – West Green Opera), Walther/Hugo/Old Woman (*Blond Eckbert* – Aldeburgh Festival, English Touring Opera), Victorin (*The Dead City*), Writer (*Jack the Ripper*), First Priest/Judge (*The Mask of Orpheus*), Hot Biscuit Slim (*Paul Bunyan* – ENO); Ferrando (*Così fan Tutte* – Irish National Opera, Longborough); Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni* – Longborough).

His concert work has included appearances at the BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, the Oxford Lieder Festival and the Royal Festival Hall. He performed the world premiere of Cheryl Frances Hoad's *Scenes from the Wild*, a dramatic song cycle for tenor and orchestra commissioned for the 50th anniversary of the City of London Sinfonia. Before taking up singing, William studied Chemistry and Mathematics at Durham University.



David Eaton

David Eaton is a conductor, pianist, lyricist and composer. He is musical director of CCO, having conducted Ruddigore and *The Yeomen of the Guard* in co-productions with Opera Holland Park. CCO's *The Barber of Seville*, in a new translation by David, was nominated for 'Best Opera Production' at the Offie Awards.

He has written an opera, *Olga's Story*, which played at the Rosemary Branch Theatre and a musical Hamilton (*Lewis*) which played in Edinburgh. David has also written a number of translations for Iford Arts, The King's Head and for Charles Court Opera, and wrote the lyrics for a translation of *The Merry Widow* for Scottish Opera and Opera Holland Park.

He wrote the music and lyrics for *Beowulf*, CCO's pantomime in association with the King's Head Theatre, which won an Off West End Award for Best Pantomime, and for *Rumpelstiltskin*, CCO's pantomime in association with Park Theatre. He also wrote music and lyrics for *Odyssey* at Jermyn Street Theatre which won CCO's second Offie for Best Pantomime and for *Napoleon: Un Petit Pantomime* last Christmas.

David also works as Director of Chorus for Longborough Festival Opera., where last year he was assistant conductor and chorus master on *The Barber of Seville*.

Septura

An American in Paris

Septura Brass Septet

Philip Cobb trumpet • **James Fountain** trumpet • **Kaitlin Wild** trumpet
Matthew Fee trombone • **Peter Moore** trombone • **Daniel West** trombone
Sasha Koushk-Jalali tuba

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Ravel	<i>Mother Goose Suite</i>
Debussy	<i>Préludes</i> (selection)
INTERVAL	
Gershwin	<i>Three Piano Preludes</i>
Joplin	<i>Suite from Treemonisha</i>
Gershwin	<i>An American in Paris</i>

Marginalised, neglected, ignored for centuries, and only now coming to the fore. The fate of brass chamber music mirrors that of the female composers of the past. Our counterfactual history redresses both balances: placing the music of two female composers, Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre and Clara Schumann, alongside that of their historically more celebrated male contemporaries. In Baroque music inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Romantic music for the keyboard we imagine a world in which these men and women had written for brass.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

- Ma Mère L'Oye – Mother Goose Suite*
- 1 *Pavane de la belle au bois dormant*. Lent
 - 2 *Le petit poucet*. Très modéré
 - 3 *Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes*.
Mouvement de marche
 - 4 *Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête*.
Mouvement de valse très modéré
 - 5 *Le Jardin féérique*. Lent et grave

Maurice Ravel always retained some of the directness and simplicity of childhood, and a delight in toys and fairy tales. He shared this enthusiasm with his friends and their families – in particular Cipa and Ida Godebski, and their two young children, Mimie and Jean. The Godebskis kept a salon in Paris frequented by leading painters, poets and musicians, and a country house near Fontainebleau, where Ravel often stayed. The composer was Mimie's favourite among her parents' friends, she remembered later, because

'he used to tell me marvellous stories. I would sit on his knee and indefatigably he would begin 'Once upon a time...' In 1904 Ravel looked after the children, then aged six and seven, while their parents were away; the opening *Pavane of Ma Mère l'Oye*, written as a piano duet for children, dates from that visit. Further work on the suite was interrupted by the death of Ravel's father, and the remaining movements were not ready until 1910, when the first performance was given by Jeanne Leleu, aged 11 and Geneviève Durony, aged 14. Ravel orchestrated the work the following year.

Mother Goose herself doesn't feature in the music, which draws mainly on the classic stories of Charles Perrault (1628–1703), whilst *Laideronnette* comes from his contemporary, Madame d'Aulnoy (1652–1705), the writer who coined the term 'fairy tale'. Between starting and finishing *Ma Mère l'Oye*, Ravel had written the fiendishly difficult – and in places highly sinister – piano suite *Gaspard de la Nuit*, and he wrote that the idea of describing the poetry of childhood 'encouraged me to simplify my style and refine my means of expression'.

Sleeping Beauty's Pavane pictures time almost at a standstill as a hundred years pass. The music is gently tuneful and harmonious, a contemporary take on the simplicity of folk song and ancient modal tonality. A note at the head of *Le petit Poucet* explains that Tom Thumb has lost his way, as the birds have eaten the trail of breadcrumbs he left as a guide. The music depicts him wandering round in circles, while the birds briefly twitter overhead.

The 'pagodas' in *Laideronnette* (*Little Ugly Girl, Empress of the Pagodas*) are not buildings but little nodding toy mandarins, who march in as the little girl takes a bath, and play tiny instruments such as lutes made from walnut shells. Ravel pictures the lively, miniature scene in the pentatonic scales and multi-layered textures of oriental music, notably the Balinese gamelan, which had memorably been heard in Paris at the great exhibition of 1889.

The *Conversation of Beauty and the Beast* compresses a whole story into a few minutes of picturesque music, set in the waltz style that appears in many different guises in Ravel's work. Beauty's graceful melody and the Beast's low and discordant voice appear alternately, and then in combination, until the moment of magical transformation.

Le jardin féérique (*The Fairy Garden*) is more an evocation of the world of fairy-tale than an individual story – starting from adult's nostalgic view of the world of make-believe and finishing with a tribute to the power of story-telling. From a solemn start, the music grows to a magnificent closing fanfare.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Arr. S Cox
Six Préludes

- 1 *Des pas sur la neige*
- 2 *La fille aux cheveux de lin*
- 3 *Minstrels*
- 4 *General Lavine – eccentric*
- 5 *Bruyères*
- 6 *La cathédrale engloutie*

Claude Debussy entered the Paris Conservatoire at the age of ten. He proved a rebellious student, intent on following his own instincts, and after winning the coveted Prix de Rome and grudgingly spending the required time in Italy, he had nothing more to do with establishment music. Before the turn of the century he had created a new musical language, often associated (though he rejected the term) with the word 'impressionism' – a delicate, misty world of subtle colours and shadings. But that was by no means the whole story. As we hear in these Preludes, his new style was also adept at expressing his sense of humour, a sharp wit, and a keen appreciation of traditional and popular music.

Des pas sur la neige (*Footprints on the snow*) is haunted by a grim two-note ostinato that becomes increasingly creepy as the harmony becomes more twisted and chromatic – a reminder that the longest of Debussy's many unfinished projects was an opera on Edgar Allan Poe's sinister *Fall of the House of Usher*.

The title of *La fille aux cheveux de lin* (*The girl with the flaxen hair*) comes from a poem in Lecomte de Lisle's *Chansons écossaises*. The undulating, unaccompanied melody that opens the piece matches the first lines of the poem, where the girl sings 'in the cool of the morning', but Debussy ignores de Lisle's hint of seduction; the gentle flow and uncomplicated harmony of the whole piece create a picture of innocent charm.

The musicians in *Minstrels* are Americans in Paris – singing and dancing groups, either African-Americans or, more often, white actors in blackface make-up, that Debussy may have seen entertaining seaside holidaymakers at the resorts on the Normandy coast. He picks up the sounds of the banjo and drum, the strutting, angular dance movements, a sentimental song, and the accompanying quick-fire gags and wisecracks.

General Lavine – eccentric depicts another American in Paris, a vaudeville clown and comic juggler who performed at the Marigny Theatre. *Le Figaro* of 1910 described Lavine's performances with comic enthusiasm: 'Where the devil does the redoubtable General Lavine get all his ideas? There is nothing [in the performance] which does not serve to underline

the comedy of this fantastic personage juggling with his hat and his [lighted] cigar. But such effects cannot be talked about. They must be seen. Quick, an aeroplane! Let's go to the Marigny!

Set in the same pastoral environment as *The girl with the flaxen hair*, *Bruyères (Heaths)* opens with a single-line melody in modal style, that might be a rural song or the piping of a shepherd. The broad, consonant harmonies, animated by delicate bursts of activity, evoke an idyllic landscape, in a multi-sensory picture that suggests the colours, scents and sounds of heathland on a warm summer afternoon.

The sound of bells dominates *La cathédrale engloutie (The engulfed cathedral)*, based on the legend of the cathedral at Ys in Brittany, lost under the sea when the city was flooded on account of the sinfulness of its inhabitants. According to the story, the bells can be heard ringing under water, and in some versions the city rises again from the sea. After a long *crescendo* (a rarity among these pieces) a chant sounds in mighty parallel chords, as if on the cathedral organ, before it sinks gradually back into the sea.

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Three Piano Preludes

- 1 Allegro ben ritmato e deciso
- 2 Andante con moto e poco rubato
- 3 Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

George Gershwin's parents were Ukrainian-Jewish, and had emigrated to the U.S. less than a decade before he was born. He took piano lessons, playing the standard classical repertoire alongside popular styles – he brought Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood* up-to-date in one of his earliest compositions: *Ragging the Träumerei*. He worked in Tin Pan Alley as a 'song-plugger', demonstrating the latest popular songs to singers, and had an explosive success as a composer aged 21, when Al Jolson recorded his song *Swanee*; it earned Gershwin \$10,000 in royalties in its first year. With his lyricist brother Ira he wrote songs for many light and successful shows during the 1920s, and explored new territory with Paul Whiteman's band in *Rhapsody in Blue*, advertised as 'an experiment in modern music'. Riches and celebrity followed.

Gershwin originally intended to write 24 preludes for piano called *The Melting Pot* – in a nod both to his classical predecessors, and to the music of 1920s America and his own synthesis of its styles. In the event, only three were chosen for publication in 1926. Gershwin gave the first performance at the Roosevelt Hotel the same year. The pieces provided an opportunity, rare at the time, for solo pianists to bring something of the raucous energy and blues-inflected

melancholy of popular music into the drawing room. The first sets a swaggering melody over a Latin beat. The second plays with the major/minor thirds and sevenths of the blues scale and, perhaps looking back to Chopin's Preludes, includes a middle section of bass melody. The third uses syncopations to drive a brief, racy piece of entertainment.

Scott Joplin (1868–1917)

Suite from *Treemonisha*

- 1 Overture
- 2 *We will rest a while*
- 3 *Aunt Dinah has blowed de horn*

George Gershwin brought together elements from art music and American popular music from the point of view of a white composer. Scott Joplin's great ambition was to do so as a black composer. For both, opera was the ultimate goal.

Joplin was born in Texarkana, Texas, the son of a freed slave. There was music in the family, and his talent was spotted by Julius Weiss, a German-born American Jewish musician who taught him for five years free-of-charge. He left home to make his living as a travelling musician, and impressed some of the 27 million visitors at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago as a pianist, cornet player and band leader. The ragtime craze emerged in the late 1890s, drawing together diverse elements – the beat of the military march, harmony from Europe and syncopation from Africa. Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*, published in 1899, was to become the standard-bearer of the genre and earned him the title 'King of Ragtime'.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Joplin was already working on his first opera, *A Guest of Honour*, topically based on the 1901 White House dinner hosted by President Theodore Roosevelt for the civil rights leader Booker T. Washington. Joplin formed his own production company and in 1903 started a tour, but the score was lost, having been confiscated with other assets to pay off debts. *Treemonisha* was completed in 1911 and published at Joplin's own expense. The *American Music and Art Journal* called it 'an entirely new form of operatic art'. Obsessed with his wish to see the opera on stage, in 1913 Joplin put on a public concert play-through with piano accompaniment; it was a disaster, and the opera was not staged until 1972 – two years after Joshua Rifkin had revived interest in piano ragtime and two years before the success of the film *The Sting* spread Joplin's name far and wide.

The plot of *Treemonisha* has both a mythical quality and topicality. On a former slave plantation in 1880s Texas, *Treemonisha* is found as a baby under a sacred tree, and grows up to become a leader who, at great risk to herself, fights ignorance and superstition and

is chosen as leader of her community. The music is a blend of ragtime, minstrel song and drawing-room ballad. The Overture foreshadows songs and scenes in the opera, with snatches of ragtime, sentimental melodies and moments of romantic melodrama. *We will rest a while*, sung by four weary cotton-pickers, is a close-harmony barber-shop number that might belong to the Yale Songbook. *Aunt Dinah has blowed de horn* announces the end of the day's work, to everyone's delight.

George Gershwin

An American in Paris

In spite of his success Gershwin repeatedly approached established composers for lessons. In the mid-1920s, he asked Ravel; the latter declined, saying that it was better to be 'a first-rate Gershwin' than a 'second-rate Ravel'. In 1928 Gershwin spent three months in Paris, where Nadia Boulanger, the doyenne of Parisian teachers and a magnet for aspiring American composers, took the same view, saying she had 'nothing to teach him'. *An American in Paris*, written during that visit, proved how right they were.

At the start of the work, the American visitor is enjoying the bustle of the French capital, with music in the witty Parisian style of the day, complete with the hoots of taxi horns (Gershwin took home four, in different keys, to use in the piece). Suffering from homesickness, the American's thoughts turn to the blues, and then, more cheerfully, to the Charleston, before ending once again on the busy streets of Paris. '*It's a humorous piece, wrote Gershwin, 'nothing solemn about it. It's not intended to draw tears. If it pleases symphony audiences as a light, jolly piece, a series of impressions musically expressed, it succeeds.*'

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Septura

Septura was born out of a passion for the awe-inspiring sound of brass instruments. Our creation – the brass septet – is uniquely vibrant and versatile, and we aim to harness its intense emotional power to produce transformative musical experiences for our audiences. In short, we are pioneering a simple message: music sounds better on brass.

To fulfil our mission we have brought together the very best brass players in the UK – holding principal positions in the Royal Philharmonic, London Symphony, BBC Symphony and Philharmonia orchestras – and with their unparalleled skill and virtuosity we have forged a chamber group described as '*dazzlingly polished*' (*BBC Music Magazine*), and now firmly established as one of the best in the world.

Our Artistic Directors, Simon Cox and Matthew Knight, are two of the most preeminent and prolific arrangers for brass, and together they have created a diverse counterfactual canon: re-imagining great music of the past for brass, and addressing historical imbalances by putting a spotlight on under-represented composers. Looking to the future, we are commissioning leading composers such as Roxanna Panufnik to create a rich repertoire of original music for brass septet.

Weaving our ever-increasing repertoire into vivid and captivating live events, we continue to break down barriers with musical and cross-arts collaborations, recently working with artists ranging from Cathy Tyson and Derek Jacobi to John Rutter and The Sixteen. We take our inimitable innovative programming around the world, touring in Europe, Japan and the USA, as well as performing at the UK's most prestigious festivals and venues, including regular appearances at London's Wigmore Hall.

We record regular releases for Naxos Records, and the first nine discs have received widespread critical acclaim, described variously as '*irresistible*' (*The Observer*), '*exceptional*' (*The Arts Desk*) and '*brass playing at its most exalted*' (*Fanfare*). Our next recording will highlight the music of female composers, past and present.

Currently Ensemble in Residence at the Royal Academy of Music, London, in 2023 we launched our first residential Summer Brass Academy in collaboration with the Rodolfus Foundation to inspire future generations of brass players. Our outreach work also includes close collaboration with the Amber Trust, through which we introduce the power of brass instruments to blind and partially-sighted children.

Ensemble Renard

Ellie Blamires flute • **Francesca Cox** oboe • **James Gilbert** clarinet
George Strivens horn • **Patrick Bolton** bassoon

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Young Artists Recital 3

Pérotin arr. Oliver Knussen	<i>Alleluia Nativitas</i>
Maurice Ravel arr. Mason Jones	<i>Le Tombeau de Couperin</i>
Béla Bartók arr. George Strivens	<i>Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm</i>
Carl Nielsen	Wind Quintet Op. 43

Ensemble Renard devote themselves to showcasing the rich breadth of colour the wind quintet is capable of to audiences throughout the UK. Their dedication to the genre has taken them to prestigious venues and festivals, including return appearances at the Aldeburgh Festival, Folkestone New Music, and BBC Radio 3's In Tune.

Today's programme comprises a set of works that showcase the sonic capabilities of the ensemble through four distinct historical lenses.

Starting with Oliver Knussen's re-imagining of Perotin's *Alleluia Nativitas*, some of the earliest known music to be notated, where vibrant verses of plainsong are coloured by different instrumental combinations.

Another neo-classical retelling of an earlier French work is Maurice Ravel's much loved *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. In this instance deftly arranged for quintet by Mason Jones, the work harkens back to baroque dance forms in homage to the great French Baroque composer, François Couperin.

Arranged for the ensemble by its horn player George Strivens is a highly energetic rendition of the final movements from Béla Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*. Now a favourite with Ensemble Renard audiences, *Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm* showcases the vibrancy and percussive capabilities of the ensemble.

Where the arrangement of Bartók's dances was written with Ensemble Renard's strengths in mind, Carl Nielsen imbued his *Wind Quintet* with the five distinct personalities of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet, the ensemble for whom the work was written. This rich and expansive piece has without doubt been cemented as the most celebrated – and celebratory – piece in the genre, and displays the breadth of all the wind quintet has to offer.

Pérotin (fl. c. 1200)
Arr. Oliver Knussen
Alleluia Nativitas

Medieval music used to be the preserve of academics and palaeographers, but research and publication in modern editions, together with ease of transmission through the media, has given it a new lease of life across a wide range of performers and listeners – from those who appreciate its 'timeless' spirituality to those interested in it as a developing tradition, modern and innovative in its own day.

The Notre Dame school of early polyphony flourished from about 1160 to 1283 AD. The two composers from the school that we know by name – thanks to an English writer known only as 'Anonymous IV' – are Pérotin and his senior colleague Léonin, who worked at the Paris cathedral during the period of its construction. They excelled, says Anonymous IV, in the composition of organum – a style in which a Gregorian plainchant is overlaid with one or more lines of lively counterpoint, written in the earliest form of systematic rhythmic notation. The style spread rapidly across the continent, carried particularly along the many routes of pilgrimage. Not everyone approved, particularly as the florid lines might introduce phrases from popular songs; the more conservative among the clergy found them more lascivious than devotional.

Pérotin's *Alleluia Nativitas* is a three-voice organum. A plainsong melody, its words referring to the nativity of the Virgin Mary, runs through the whole piece, sometimes held as a drone, at other times moving

steadily, while two upper parts dance overhead, sharing and exchanging ideas.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)
Le Tombeau de Couperin
Arr. Mason Jones
1 Prelude
2 Fugue
3 Menuet and Musette
4 Rigaudon

Le Tombeau de Couperin, was planned, in Maurice Ravel's words, 'as an act of homage addressed less to François Couperin himself than to the music of eighteenth-century France'. Ravel began writing it in July 1914, when he was already at work on the Piano Trio (heard at this year's Festival on 13 and 26 May). As the hostilities of World War I broke out, he worked furiously to finish the Trio; *Le Tombeau* was put on hold for several years. In the meantime, Ravel lost friends and acquaintances in action, and his mother died, to whom he was probably more devoted than to any other individual in his life. When he took up work on the *Tombeau* again in 1917, he turned perhaps with relief to this tribute to less troubled times, which carried a message of French nationalism through its elegant musical evocation of a great period in the country's history. The work has Ravel's usual clarity and polish and avoids obviously emotional gestures, but fallen individuals were remembered in the dedications of each movement.

The *Prélude*, as charming as a Watteau painting, ripples along in a continuous stream, animated by crisp ornaments. The *Fugue* pays tribute to eighteenth-century counterpoint. It starts from a subject in short phrases, more like a bird song than a melody, and unfolds with gracefully intertwining parts.

Ravel had been writing period-style minuets ever since the *Menuet Antique* twenty years earlier, and always treated the dance with respect. This minuet is gracefully tuneful, with a more elegiac central 'Musette' where the melody moves in parallel chords over a persistent drone bass. The lively *Rigaudon* opens with a flourish and begins and ends in high spirits, slowing for a sustained melody in the middle section.

Bela Bartók (1881–1945)
Arr. George Strivens
Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm

Born in Nagyszentmiklos, Hungary (now part of Romania), Bartók was composing at six and performing as a solo pianist at eleven. His training at the Budapest Academy suggested a future as

a virtuoso pianist, but key turning-points followed: his encounters with the work of Richard Strauss gave new energy to his compositions, whilst a Hungarian peasant song sung by a Transylvanian-born maid in a hotel where he was staying ignited his lifelong involvement with authentic folk music.

Bartók's later career was divided between composing, performing, teaching, and pioneering research in ethnomusicology. Widely travelled, he quickly established an international reputation, writing of *'the brotherhood of peoples, brotherhood in spite of all wars and conflicts. I try – to the best of my ability – to serve this idea in my music; therefore I don't reject any influence... The source must only be clean, fresh and healthy!'* Early in the twentieth century, when modernism and the growing folk music movement appeared to be pulling in opposite directions, Bartók showed how powerfully they could be combined in a unified style.

The *Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm* form the last section of Bartók's graded series of 153 piano pieces, *Mikrokosmos*, written between 1926 and 1939. Starting from elementary five-finger exercises, written for his young son Péter, they take the student through a comprehensive range of technical and musical issues, and conclude with several dozen virtuoso pieces that Bartók frequently played in his own recitals. These Six Dances, the conclusion of the series, gain tremendous energy from the asymmetric rhythms of Bulgarian folk music. Instead of the usual tread of equal beats in west European music, they may have bars of five or seven notes, or (as in the final dance) eight notes subdivided into unequal groups.

The first dance has bars of nine notes grouped 4+2+3, and features a soulful, emotional melody over a background of rising scales. Each subsequent dance demonstrates a distinctive metre and character, culminating in the sixth dance, where a headlong rhythmic ostinato underpins a proud theme in declamatory chords.

Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)

Wind Quintet Op. 43

- 1 Allegro ben moderato
- 2 Menuet
- 3 Praeludium. Adagio. Tema. Un poco andantino. Variations 1–11. Andantino festivo

Carl Nielsen was born into an impoverished family on the Danish island of Funen, where his father, a house painter by trade, was in demand for local celebrations as a traditional musician, playing fiddle and cornet. Early musical promise took Carl to the band of the local militia, and then to the Royal Danish Academy and a travelling scholarship to study in Germany and France. In Paris he met his future wife, the sculptor

Anne Marie Brodersen – the start of a stormy relationship marked by Nielsen's frequent infidelities. For sixteen years he earned a modest salary in the second violin section of the Royal Danish Orchestra, and from 1916 taught at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen.

All this time he 'couldn't help' composing, following his imagination down novel paths that found both supporters and detractors. Often regarded as an 'outsider' during his lifetime, he was in two minds about public success, saying, in connection with proposed performances in the United States, that he had *'nothing against becoming known the world over'*, whilst mistrusting popularity: *'only a small – indeed a very small – minority of people have real power of judgement'*.

The Wind Quintet was written in 1922, just after the powerful Fifth Symphony. *'The outer trappings are very modest,'* he wrote, *'but that makes the technical side all the more difficult, and this I have found stimulating in a very particular way'*. Nielsen designed the piece for his friends in the Copenhagen Wind Quintet; throughout the work, the five instruments are presented as individuals and given material that emphasises their contrasting timbres and characters. The first movement opens in pastoral mood, with a flowing line from the bassoon, and later horn, answered by birdsong-like figures from oboe, flute and clarinet. Following a traditional 'sonata form' structure, the first section of the movement is repeated, and after a development sharing thematic fragments between the instruments, the surprise interruption of two fortissimo, trilling chords signals the recapitulation.

The Menuet is a conscious nod to the past, with its formal opening tune and traditional tonality. The texture is simplified, too, with the instruments coming in two by two – clarinet and bassoon and then flute and oboe, with occasional comments from the horn. In the central 'trio', the unpredictable twists and turns give the impression, perhaps, of the scene in a distorting mirror.

A *fortissimo* entry from horn and bassoon, followed by the plangent sound of cor anglais, replacing the oboe, immediately sets the final movement in a more dramatic landscape, with improvisatory solos from the upper instruments and constant fluctuations of speed and volume. As a theme for the variations that follow, Nielsen extended a melody from his *Hymns and Sacred Songs*, a set of 50 short pieces 'for home, church and school' written in 1912–16. He treats the theme very freely, and rings the changes on the instruments, including unaccompanied solos for bassoon and horn as well as accompanied solos for upper instruments and bold, rhythmic variations for the full ensemble. Moods are equally varied, ranging

from quiet contemplation to comedy and culminating in the return of the theme, its original triple metre now converted to a ceremonial four-beat pace.

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Ensemble Renard Biography

London-based wind quintet Ensemble Renard comprises five of the UK's most outstanding young musicians. Together, they exist to explore a wide range of timbral possibilities within modern day chamber performance. Centrally a wind quintet, Ensemble Renard's frequent collaboration with composers and guest instrumentalists allows them to showcase a prismatic variety of colours.

Ensemble Renard carefully curates compelling and contrasting programmes tailored to each audience, aiming to take repertoire rarely given the light of day to audiences from London to the Hebrides and beyond. From Gershwin to Knussen, each piece they play demonstrates the kaleidoscopic versatility of the ensemble, and most Ensemble Renard concerts feature works especially written or arranged for them.

Ensemble Renard have quickly emerged onto the scene as one of the UK's most promising young chamber ensembles. Following a year as Chamber Music Fellows at the Royal Academy of Music in 2021, the Ensemble have gone on to receive several accolades, becoming Tunnell Trust awardees, Britten-Pears Young Artists, Stoller Hall Young Artists, and awardees of the Countess of Munster Musical Trust's Recital Scheme. In 2024, they were awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award, and in 2025 became Associate Artists on the UK Artists Directory and City Music Foundation Artists.

Performance highlights of the ensemble's career so far include repeat performances at the Aldeburgh Festival. In the 2025 season they took over the Red House for the day to present an immersive tour through Berio's *Sequenzas* for woodwind instruments alongside a centenary celebration for both Berio and Boulez at the Jubilee Hall to critical acclaim. Ensemble Renard made their European debut at the Dinard Opening Festival in Brittany in 2022, have appeared on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* with Sean Rafferty, and have returned yearly to Llanfyllin Music Festival since 2022.

Ensemble Renard champions new music and regularly commissions works for wind quintet, having begun their career working with composers including Hans Abrahamsen and John Woolrich on performances of their repertoire. They were among the first artists to be awarded a grant from the

Vaughan Williams Foundation in support of a new commission by Luke Lewis, and in 2023 they recorded their debut album of commissions by the Stomping Ground collective. With support from Britten Pears Arts, Ensemble Renard commissioned a wind quintet from Cheryl Frances-Hoad which received its world premiere at Aldeburgh in June 2025.

A typical Ensemble Renard season has something for everyone. They can be found performing at the UK's most established music clubs, putting on family concerts with narrator, school-based workshops, and collaborating with organisations including Wigmore Hall and Spitalfields Music, in addition to performances at new music festivals in collaboration with a host of different composers.



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Pulman and Stilgoe – Hooray for Hollywood

Joe Stilgoe piano • Liza Pulman singer



Some of the best loved songs of our movie-musical lives. *The Wizard of Oz to Wicked, West Side Story to La La Land* – and many, many more

The Hollywood musical feels like it's been with us forever. Starting with the *Jazz Singer* in 1927, almost 100 years later audiences are still flocking to the box-office to watch the big screen come alive with singing, dancing, comedy and romance. Liza Pulman and Joe Stilgoe's combined love and exhaustive movie knowledge is on technicolour display here as they bring some of these great movie-musical songs to life on the stage. No big screen, only big talents, great harmonies and lots of music and laughter. So, bring your popcorn as they bring you the magic of the movie musicals

Joe Stilgoe

Joe Stilgoe is an internationally acclaimed singer, pianist and songwriter.

Joe has released nine solo albums, five of which have topped the UK Jazz chart. His current record is *Welcome To The Club*, which has been declared 'brilliantly unique' by *The Telegraph* – it features Joe supported by a new band, The Entertainers, comprising some of the finest young jazz musicians in the UK including Emma Smith, Honey Boulton and Joe Webb. Ten new songs, written with virtuoso clarinettist and one-time jazz club owner Giacomo Smith, which shine a light on the characters found in jazz clubs around the world. His previous album *THEATRE* featured The Metropole Orkest and was released in 2022 to huge praise with a launch show at The Barbican featuring The BBC Concert Orchestra. The album, produced by the legendary Steve Power and arranged by Tom Richards, has been recognised as a landmark in Joe's recording career.

Growing up as the youngest of 5 children he was surrounded by music, with two parents in the business – songwriter and TV personality Richard Stilgoe and opera-singer Annabel Hunt.

He is a true modern-day entertainer, known globally as a performer of wit, style and a level of musicianship which has seen him recognised as one of the best singer-pianists in the world. Always searching for a new way of bringing not only his own songs but those he loves from the past to a new audience, he is an enticing mix of his heroes Danny Kaye, Nat King Cole and Dudley Moore. He is known for writing songs that sound like they've been around for years and for adapting classics and making them sound like they've just been written.

The album *Stilgoe In The Shed*, which topped the UK Jazz Chart, came about after Joe started broadcasting on YouTube from his shed at the start of the pandemic in 2020. The resulting show *Stilgoe In The Shed* picked up over 250,000 viewers around the world, and led to this unique album.

He has created award-winning shows for the London Jazz Festival including *A Tribute To Gene Kelly* at LSO St Lukes, *Songs On Film* at Cadogan Hall (plus three sold out Edinburgh Festival seasons and UK tour), and in 2019 *Joe Stilgoe & His Big Band* at St Johns Smith Square. He has performed with orchestras and bands including The John Wilson Orchestra, RPO, BBC Concert Orchestra, The Hallé, BBC Big Band, RTE, Lahti Symphony, RLPO and many more. In 2026 he reunites with Fascinating Aida's Liza Pulman for a UK tour, culminating in a run of shows at the Duchess Theatre in the West End.

A hugely sought-after performer for society parties, corporate events and charity fundraisers, he was asked to perform for The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh's 70th wedding anniversary at Windsor, and has given private performances for Prince Charles at St James Palace, the Duke of Edinburgh at Windsor, the Duchess of Cornwall at The Ritz in London and Prince Edward at Frogmore House, among many others.

He works extensively on radio, having hosted and starred many times in BBC Radio 2's *Friday Night is Music Night*, while also being a regular presence on the station (*Joe Stilgoe – Christmas At The Movies, Jingle Bell Joe, One Night Stand at Ronnie Scott's*), and being a regular guest and presenter on JazzFM, Radio 3 and 4.

He also has a successful secondary career writing for theatre, having created the musicals *The Jungle Book, The Midnight Gang* and three shows with Julia Donaldson – *Zog, Zog & The Flying Doctors* and 2025's *The Baddies*. He is currently working on new

musicals, including *Hooked* with Gary Barlow and Jason Manford.

On TV he has appeared most notably hosting *BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year*, and least notably in *Bargain Hunt*.

Liza Pulman

Liza Pulman is a critically acclaimed singer, actress and comedienne. Her eclectic career has taken her from Glyndebourne Opera to London's West End and her work as one third of the legendary British satirical song-writing trio, Fascinating Aida, has seen her perform all over the world. Her extensive solo career has established her as a unique concert performer winning hearts and plaudits for her astonishing vocals and natural storytelling.

Liza's connection to a song and to a lyric is what separates her from the crowd and takes her right to the heart of every ballad and every note that she sings. Her connection to an audience is just as impressive as her myriad 5* reviews have all noted: it's not just her flawless vocals but also her easy wit and natural storytelling that make her one of the most compelling performers of her day.

Her solo shows *Liza Pulman Sings Streisand* and *The Heart Of It* have played London's premier theatres including a run at the Lyric Shaftesbury Avenue, at Wilton's Music Hall, Cadogan Hall and The Other Palace.

In 2023 Liza began a collaboration with Joe Stilgoe, their show *A Couple Of Swells* playing to sell out audiences at London's Duchess Theatre, Aldeburgh, Chichester and Bath. Their new show *Hooray For Hollywood* opened in Spring 2026

The Sixteen Choral Pilgrimage

The Sixteen • Harry Christophers conductor

Sponsored by Mr & Mrs Roderick Chamberlain and The Greenwood Family Trust



© Johnny Millar

de Vivánco *Christus factus est pro nobis*
 de Morales *Emendemus in Melius*
 de Vivánco *Assumpta est Maria a6*
 de Morales *Gaude et laetare Ferrariensis civitas*
 Kerensa Briggs *Lead, kindly light (new commission)*
 de Vivánco *Magnificat Octavi toni*
INTERVAL
 de Morales *Jubilate Deo omnis terra*
 de Vivánco *O quam suavis est, Domine a4*
 de Morales *Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix a6*
 de Morales *Lamentabatur Jacob a5*
 de Vivánco *Caritas Pater est a9*
 James MacMillan *Nothing in vain*

In one of his letters from the Spanish colonies in Central and Southern America, Peter Martyr d'Anghiera declared that 'Spain is the only happy country'. The Italian-born historian's verdict, recorded in 1490 and shared by many of his contemporaries, reflected a reality far removed from the experience of earlier generations. It was shaped by the successful political and dynastic project that grew from the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and the young Isabella of Castille in 1469. Their union helped bind together the formerly disparate Iberian kingdoms, creating a centralised monarchy that set about eroding the influence of the old nobility and the Cortes or general councils. It also prepared the ground for colonial expansion overseas, which brought untold riches to Spain and bankrolled the Siglo de Oro, a true

Golden Age of sacred art, architecture and music that lasted from the time of Ferdinand and Isabella at least until the mid-1600s.

The Spanish explorer and conquistador Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first European to discover the Pacific Ocean, wrote to Ferdinand II in 1513 to report that 'rivers of gold' flowed through his settlement at Santa María la Antigua del Darién. Food, he added, was scarcer than treasure. His letter triggered a gold rush to what Peter Martyr labelled as the New World. The Siglo de Oro, the Age of Gold, was also aptly named. It drew from both the vast riches of Spain's American empire and the great strength of what the historian of religion Diarmaid MacCulloch calls 'an especially self-conscious version' of traditional Latin Christianity and the 'monolithic Christian culture' which it supported. The Sixteen's *Choral Pilgrimage* programme presents the fruits of that culture as cultivated by Cristóbal de Morales, the greatest of the early Golden Age composers, and Sebastián de Vivanco, whose intricate, often complex counterpoint and expressive use of modal harmonies adorned the liturgy at the height of the Spanish Empire.

Vivanco's story shares common features with that of his illustrious contemporary, Tomás Luis de Victoria. Both were born and raised in Ávila, both were choirboys at the city's cathedral, both were ordained to the priesthood. Unlike Victoria, who made his name in Rome before returning home to serve the Dowager Empress Maria, Vivanco spent his long career in Spain, rising from relative obscurity as *maestro de capilla* or chapel master at Lleida (Lérida) Cathedral to hold the same post at the prestigious cathedrals of Ávila and Salamanca. Soon after arriving in Salamanca in 1602, Vivanco was appointed professor of music at the city's ancient university, a leading training ground for administrators of Spain's colonial possessions. The composer's devotion as cathedral prebend and university professor is reflected in the engraving from the titlepage of his *Liber magnificarum* (Book of Magnificats) of 1607, in which he is depicted kneeling before a crucifix, flanked by his clerical biretta and academic cap and holding a book inscribed in Latin with the words 'Give me of thy gifts', a heartfelt prayer for God's blessing.

Devotion to God, Jesus and the Virgin Mary are interlocked in Vivanco's *Magnificat octavi toni*, one of two settings from the *Liber magnificarum* built on the last of the eight Gregorian tones used for reciting the Magnificat. In this version, Vivanco sets the text's odd verses to majestic polyphony for up to eight voices and sets the even verses to plainchant. In the concluding 'Gloria', two antiphonal choirs heighten the reverence shown to the words 'et Spiritui Sancto'.

Reverence and ecstasy coalesce in *Assumpta est Maria*, a setting for six voices that rivals rival

Palestrina's famous setting of the Marian antiphon with the economy of its counterpoint. Most of Vivanco's surviving motets were published in 1610 in an anthology that spans the church year. *Christus factus est pro nobis*, to a text from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, was written as the Gradual at Mass on Maundy Thursday. It commemorates Christ's obedience to God to the point of submitting to death on the cross, expressed in austere yet agile counterpoint for three choirs, each of four voices. *Caritas Pater est* concerns the co-equal, co-eternal nature of the Holy Trinity and the unconditional love that emanates from God. Vivanco pays homage to the triune divinity by using three choirs of three voices, each heard in succession, then as one, then again as independent yet equal entities, creating a sumptuous aural metaphor for the *homoousion*, the one substance shared by the three persons of the Trinity. *O quam suavis*, preserved in a Salamanca Cathedral manuscript, evokes the intensity of private prayer. Its exquisite four-part writing, coloured with delicate touches of harmonic tension and release, is matched to the tenderness of a text associated with the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Famed during his lifetime and long after, Cristóbal de Morales earned an esteemed reputation with publications distributed widely in Europe and the New World. Born in Seville, he may have been a chorister at its cathedral and was certainly educated there in music and its sister liberal arts. Appointed as *maestro de capilla* of Ávila Cathedral in 1526, he left soon after to take up the same job at Plasencia; it seems likely that he met his older contemporary, the Franco-Flemish composer Nicolas Gombert, during the wedding festivities held in Seville in 1526 for Emperor Charles V and Isabella of Portugal. Having quit his Plasencia post in 1531, he travelled to Italy, possibly settling in Naples, before moving to Rome in 1534, where documents refer to him as a 'priest from Toledo' and a chaplain to the imperial ambassador to the Holy See.

Morales joined the papal chapel choir in 1535 where he enjoyed the support of Pope Paul III, a repentant former libertine who instigated the Catholic Reformation in 1545 by convening the Council of Trent. He returned to Spain after a decade at the Vatican to serve as *maestro de capilla* in Toledo, then Marchena and finally, from 1551 until his death two years later, in Málaga. Despite suffering from chronic poor health, Morales' output of sacred compositions was both large and consistently high in quality. *Emendemus in melius* for five voices sets the responsory for Ash Wednesday, a time for repentance accentuated by the motet's yearning nature and presence in a tenor cantus firmus to words from Genesis: 'Remember, man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return'.

Remembrance runs likewise through *Lamentabatur Jacob*. Morales' motet, a setting of the Respond for the third Sunday in Lent, first published in 1543, recalls a powerful story from the Old Testament Book of Genesis. Jacob's favourite son, Joseph, is sold into slavery by his jealous half-brothers, who tell their father that he has been ripped to pieces by vicious beasts. 'Jacob tore his clothes; he put on sackcloth and for many days he mourned his son,' says the Bible. Joseph, meanwhile, rises from slavery in Egypt to become vizier, the pharaoh's highest official. During the second year of a long famine, Jacob sends his sons into Egypt, where Joseph has overseen the storage of enormous quantities of grain. Unrecognized by his brothers, he has them arrested as spies, keeps all but one in prison and tells the rest that he will release him in exchange for their youngest brother, Benjamin. The first part of *Lamentabatur Jacob*, with its long lines of austere counterpoint, conveys Jacob's grief over the apparent loss of Joseph and news that Benjamin has been held as surety in Egypt. The old man's sadness becomes almost palpable as the music unfolds, underlined by his despairing plea to God that he may see his sons once more. A thinning of texture and more urgent rhythms at the start of the motet's second part mark the moment when Jacob falls to the ground and, with tears in his eyes, begs the Lord to 'allow me in my distress to see them again'.

Penitence and lament give way to joy and exaltation in *Gaude et laetare Ferrariensis civitas*. This ceremonial motet for six voices was written for a service of thanksgiving held at Ferrara Cathedral in 1539 to celebrate the recent appointment as cardinal of Ippolito II d'Este, the art-loving son of Lucrezia Borgia and Alfonso I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. Its counterpoint strikes a fine balance between exuberance and elegance, apt for the occasion for which it was created. *Jubilare Deo omnis terra*, Morales' earliest dateable composition, was written in 1538 to mark the Truce of Nice, a peace treaty brokered by Pope Paul III to settle the bloody rivalry between Francis I of France and Emperor Charles V. The work's intricate polyphony is woven around an intense five-note *cantus firmus* that proclaims the imperative, 'Gaudeamus', 'Let us rejoice'. *Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix*, a motet for the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, blends the rigours of Franco-Flemish counterpoint with a melodic radiance that conjures the warmth of Spain and invites deep reverence for Mary, the Mother of God.

Saint John Henry Newman left an indelible legacy as theologian and as champion of the post-Reformation revival of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales. The depths of his achievements were recognized in 2025 when Pope Leo XIV named him as a Doctor of the Church, one of only 38 saints to be so recognized for their contributions to theology or doctrine. The clarity of Newman's thinking resounds in his hymn *Lead, Kindly Light*, drafted in 1833 during the young

Anglican clergyman's slow return from Italy, where he had fallen gravely ill and almost died of fever. The hymn speaks of casting off pride and placing absolute faith in God's guidance, a faith that led to its Anglican author's conversion to Catholicism. Kerensa Briggs' setting, commissioned for The Sixteen's 2026 *Choral Pilgrimage*, opens in the luminous key of F sharp major but does not rest there. Its sonorous harmonies are enriched by passing dissonances and complex chords that so often pierce the 'encircling gloom'. Textural contrasts involving solo soprano and alto and choral writing in four parts that frequently divide further enhance the music's shimmering quality. The English folksong melody 'Dives and Lazarus' emerges early in the piece to recall the parable from Luke's gospel of the rich man condemned to hell for ignoring the beggar at his gate and the beggar raised to heaven's eternal light.

Nothing in Vain sets words from Newman's meditation on the individual's relationship with God. The original text was sensitively adapted in 2021 by Robert Willis, the music-loving Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, whose reworking emphasizes the importance of personal mission to the divine plan. James MacMillan's work, written to mark the 65th birthday of the American-British philanthropist John Studzinski, exploits the textural and expressive possibilities of double-choir writing. Its spirited counterpoint is burnished with traces of polytonality, creating what the composer calls 'impressionistic cloudiness'. *Nothing in Vain* opens with a solo soprano melody etched with the inflections of traditional highland Scottish and Celtic music, picked up and restated in imitative counterpoint by the first choir. Points of imitation, canon and antiphonal repetition, meditative in their mantra-like restatements, serve as structural features throughout the score. The double choir becomes a metaphor for 'the bond of connection between persons', with each link – or voice part – having equal value in its musical function and spiritual intensity. All voices surge to proclaim, 'I shall be good, I shall be an angel of peace', before making way for the cantorial solo tenor's florid profession of the providential rewards that come from keeping God's commandments. Choral counterpoint pervades the work's second half, punctuated by an iridescent setting of 'my sickness, my perplexity, my sorrow' and, at its close, by rapturous homophonic declarations that 'God does nothing in vain'.

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Sebastián de Vivanco (c.1551–1632)

Christus factus est pro nobis
Christus factus est pro nobis obediens
usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.
Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum
et dedit illi nomen,
quod est super omne nomen.

*Christ became obedient for us
even unto death, death on the cross.
God therefore exalted him and gave him a name
which is above all names.*
Philippians 2: 8-9

Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500–1553)

Emendemus in melius
Emendemus in melius,
quae ignoranter peccavimus:
ne subito praeoccupati die mortis,
quaeramus spatium paenitentiae
et invenire non possimus.
Attende, Domine, et miserere,
quia peccavimus tibi.

Tenor: Memento, homo, quia pulvis es,
et in pulverem reverteris.

*Let us make amends for the sins
we have committed in ignorance,
lest we should suddenly, at the day of death,
seek a place of repentance,
and not be able to find one.
Hearken to us, O God, and have pity on us,
because we have sinned against thee.*
Tenor: Remember, man, that thou art dust
and unto dust thou shalt return.
Responsory on Ash Wednesday

Sebastián de Vivanco

Assumpta est Maria
Assumpta est Maria in caelum:
gaudent angeli,
laudantes benedicunt Dominum.
Alleluia.

*Mary has been taken up into heaven:
the angels all rejoice:
they bless the Lord praising him.*
Alleluia.

Antiphon for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sebastián de Vivanco (c.1551–1632)

Gaude et laetare Ferrariensis civitas
Gaude et laetare, Ferrariensis civitas,
nam maximus Pontifex Paulus,
laudabilis valde et sapientiae cuius
non est numerus,
qui de fulgore Italiae, lumen ecclesiae suae
vocavit Hippolytum.
Beatam igitur familiam Estensium
dicant omnes generationes,
quia fecit ei magna qui potens est,
et gloriosum nomen eius in aeternum.

Jubilemus Hippolyto
et cantemus canticum novum,
Hippolyte, tuorum Ferrariaeque decus,
respice in servum tuum,
quia spes mea et salus mea es tu,
et factus es mihi in salutem,
tu es Dominus meus,
et magnificabo nomen tuum in aeternum.
Cantus firmus: Magnificabo nomen tuum in
aeternum

*Rejoice and be glad, city of Ferrara,
for the most mighty Pope Paul [III],
greatly worthy of praise and of whose wisdom
there is no number,
has called Ippolito from the splendour of Italy
to be a light for his Church.
Therefore shall all generations call
the House of Este blessed,
for he that is mighty has done great things for him,
and glorious is his name for ever.*

*Let us rejoice with Ippolito
and sing a new song: Ippolito,
glory of your people and of Ferrara,
look upon your servant,
for you are my hope and my saviour,
and have become a salvation for me,
you are my Lord,
and I shall magnify your name for ever.*
Cantus firmus: I shall magnify your name for
ever.
In honour of Ippolito II d'Este

Kerensa Briggs (b.1991)

Lead, Kindly Light

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom;
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on.

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, 'til
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile.
St John Henry Newman (1801-90)

Sebastián de Vivanco

Magnificat octavi toni

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Et exsultavit spiritus meus
in Deo, salutari meo.
Quia respexit
humilitatem ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc
eatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna,
qui potens est:
et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius a progenie
in progenies: timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos
mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede:
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum:
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros:
Abraham, et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio,
et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.
And my spirit has rejoiced
in God my saviour.
For he has regarded
the lowliness of his handmaiden:
for, behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty
has done great things to me:
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is from generation
unto generation, unto them that fear him.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud
in the imagination of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their seat
and exalted the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He has received Israel, his servant,
being mindful of his mercy.
As he spoke to our forefathers,
to Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

INTERVAL

Cristóbal de Morales

Jubilate Deo omnis terra

Jubilate Deo omnis terra,
cantate omnes, jubilate et psallite,
quoniam suadente Paulo,
Carolus et Franciscus, principes terrae,
convenerunt in unum,
et pax de caelo descendit.
O felix aetas, O felix Paule,
O vos felices principes,
qui christiano populo pacem tradidistis.
Vivat Paulus! Vivat Carolus!
Vivat Franciscus!
Vivant simul,
et pacem nobis donent in aeternum!
Cantus firmus: Gaudeamus!

*Rejoice in the Lord, all you lands,
sing, all of you, rejoice and make music,
since, persuaded by Paul,
Charles and Francis, princes of the world,
have reached agreement,
and peace has descended from heaven.
O happy age, O happy Paul,
O ye happy princes,
who have restored peace to the Christian people.
Long live Paul! Long live Charles!
Long live Francis!
Long may they all live,
and may they give us peace for eternity!
Cantus firmus: Let us rejoice!*

Cristóbal de Morales

Jubilate Deo omnis terra

O quam suavis est, Domine, Spiritus tuus
qui ut dulcedinem tuam
in filios demonstrares,
pane suavissimo de caelo praestito,
esurientes reple bonis,
fastidiosos divites dimittens inanes.

*O how gentle, Lord, is thy Spirit,
who, to show thy kindness
to thy children,
have given the most delicate sweet bread of
heaven,
and have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the haughty rich empty away.
Antiphon at First Vespers on the Feast of Corpus Christi*

Cristóbal de Morales

Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix

Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix
super choros angelorum
ad caelestia regna.
Virgo prudentissima
quo progredieris
quasi aurora valde rutilans?
Filia Sion
tota formosa et suavis es:
pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol.

*The holy Mother of God is raised up
above the choir of angels
to the heavenly kingdom.
Virgin most wise,
where are you going,
shining brightly as the dawn?
Daughter of Sion,
you are most comely and sweet:
as beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun*

Cristóbal de Morales

Lamentabatur Jacob

Lamentabatur Jacob de duobus filiis suis:
Heu me, dolens sum de Joseph perduto
et tristis nimis de Benjamin ducto pro
alimoniis. Precor caelestem Regem ut me
dolentem nimium faciat eos cernere.
Prosternens se Jacob vehementer cum
lacrimis pronus in terram et adorans ait.
Precor caelestem Regem ut me
dolentem nimium faciat eos cernere.

*Jacob was lamenting for his two sons, saying:
Woe is me, I am distraught over the loss of Joseph,
and deeply sad for Benjamin, taken as surety.
I beseech the heavenly King that he might allow
me in my distress to see them again.
Jacob prostrated himself violently into the ground;
flat on his face and in tears he worshipped
and said: I beseech the heavenly King that he
might allow me in my distress to see them again.*

Sebastián de Vivanco

Caritas Pater est

Caritas Pater est, gratia Filius,
communicatio Spiritus Sanctus.
O beata Trinitas!
Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus
una substantia est.
O beata Trinitas!
Tibi laus, tibi gloria,
tibi gratiarum actio
in saecula sempiterna.
O beata Trinitas!

*The Father is love, the Son is grace,
the Holy Spirit is imparting.*

O blessed Trinity!

*The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit
is one in substance.*

O blessed Trinity!

*Praise to you, glory to you,
acts of thanksgiving to you
through everlasting ages.*

O blessed Trinity!

James MacMillan (b.1959)

Nothing in vain

God has created me to do some definite service –
Some work which has not been committed
to another.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection
between persons.

I shall do good, be an angel of peace, a preacher
of truth in my own place

If I do but keep God's commandments.

Whatever I am I can never be thrown away.

My sickness, my perplexity, my sorrow may serve God
Who does nothing in vain.

When I am amongst strangers and friendless,

When my spirits sink and my future is hidden,

Still I may serve –

For God does nothing in vain.

St John Henry Newman,

adapted by Robert Willis (1947-2024)

Harry Christophers

Harry Christophers stands among today's great
champions of choral music. In partnership with
The Sixteen, he has set benchmark standards
for the performance of everything from late
medieval polyphony to important new works by
contemporary composers.

Under his leadership The Sixteen has established
its hugely successful annual Choral Pilgrimage,
created the Sacred Music series for BBC television,
and developed an acclaimed period-instrument
orchestra. Highlights of their recent work include an
Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour
of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610, the world premiere
of James MacMillan's Fifth Symphony at the 2019
Edinburgh International Festival and a live-streamed
performance of MacMillan's Stabat mater from the
Sistine Chapel. They have also undertaken extensive
tours of the USA and The Netherlands, and continue
to tour the UK with their 2025 Choral Pilgrimage.

Harry Christophers served as Artistic Director of the
Handel and Haydn Society from 2008 to 2022 and is
now their Conductor Laureate. He has worked as
guest conductor with, among others, the London
Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the San
Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches
Kammerphilharmonie. Christophers' extensive
commitment to opera has embraced productions for
English National Opera and Lisbon Opera and work
with the Granada, Buxton and Grange festivals.

In 2019 he collaborated with BBC Radio 3 presenter
Sara Mohr-Pietsch to produce a book entitled *A New
Heaven: Choral Conversations* in celebration of the
group's 40th anniversary.

Harry Christophers was awarded a CBE in the
Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours list. He is an
Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as
well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama,
and has Honorary Doctorates in Music from the
Universities of Leicester, Northumbria, Canterbury
Christ Church and Kent.

The Sixteen

Whether performing a simple medieval hymn or
expressing the complex musical and emotional
language of a contemporary choral composition,
The Sixteen does so with qualities common to
all great ensembles. Tonal warmth, rhythmic
precision and immaculate intonation are clearly
essential to the mix. But it is the courage and
intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that
speak above all to so many people.

Celebrating its 45th anniversary in 2024 The Sixteen
gave its first concert in 1979 under the direction of
Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their
pioneering work since has made a profound impact
on the performance of choral music and attracted a
large new audience, not least as 'The Voices of Classic
FM' and through BBC television's Sacred Music series.

The voices and period-instrument players of The
Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music,
a breadth reflected in their annual Choral Pilgrimage
to Britain's great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular
appearances at the world's leading concert halls,
and award-winning recordings for The Sixteen's CORO
and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of
James MacMillan's Stabat mater (at the Barbican in
2016 and live streamed from the Sistine Chapel in
2018), and his Fifth Symphony 'Le grand inconnu'
(2019 Edinburgh International Festival and the
Lincoln Centre, New York), both commissioned for
Harry Christophers and The Sixteen by the Genesis
Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel
oratorios, extensive tours of the USA and The
Netherlands, and a specially-commissioned series
of programmes presented by Sir Simon Russell Beale
entitled *A Choral Odyssey*.



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Big Sing Saturday

Led by **Maia Hendrickx**

The Choirs: **VoxFresh** • **Sing For Fun** • **Cromwell Singers** • **Kingsclere Singers**
VoxSonix • **Harmony InSpire** • **Sing Louder** • **Reading Male Voice Choir** • **Soul Reason**



Celebrate the joy of singing together at a whole-day festival showcasing the best of Newbury and the surrounding area. This relaxed, family-friendly event brings together amateur choirs across genres – classical, gospel, pop, folk, jazz and more – for a day of performance, connection and community.

Audiences are welcome to come and go through the day, enjoy refreshments, and soak up a programme full of diverse voices and inspiring leaders. A retiring collection will be taken in support of a local charity.

VoxFresh is a professional and exciting singing group where young vocalists can discover their full potential through contemporary music.

Sing For Fun is exactly what it sounds like! We sing a joyful mix of pop, rock and musical theatre.

Cromwell Singers are a choir with approximately 50 members that have been performing a wide repertoire since 1976.

Kingsclere Singers, formally called 'The Kingsclere Choral Society', was formed in the 1922. They perform a wide range of music: from Bach to Beatles!

VoxSonix is all about community singing with each group defining its own journey with song choices, opportunities, and teaching pace.

Harmony InSpire is an award-winning women's a cappella chorus singing four-part harmony in a sparkling mix of musical theatre, pop favourites, and heartfelt ballads.

Sing Louder began January 2022 and has flourished into a wonderful choir. Performing all kinds of music from modern pop, musical theatre to old classics. Working on two part and SAB pieces.

Reading Male Voice Choir has celebrated its 55th year. Singing nationally and internationally, in the spring of 2025, RMVC were announced as winners of a What's on Reading Cultural Award – Champion of Reading. This was to celebrate our rich history of support of local and national charities and representing Reading on the national and international stage for over the last 50 years

Soul Reason is a choir with groove and heart! Our mission is to bring people together through the power of music, fostering a sense of community and joy. We believe in the transformative power of singing, not only for individual wellbeing but also for creating a collective spirit that resonates beyond our rehearsals and performances.



Maia Hendrickx

Maia Hendrickx is a professional singer, choral director, and musical leader based in West Berkshire. A graduate of East 15 Acting School, she has built a varied career as a soloist and session singer, working across Musical Theatre, contemporary music, folk, jazz and ensemble performance.

Alongside her performing work, Maia is the founder and director of Maia Hendrickx Vocal Studios (MHVS), which she established in 2015. Over recent years, her focus has increasingly shifted towards ensemble singing and community-based music-making, shaped by a deep belief in the power of shared voice to build confidence, connection, and joy. She also sits on the board of trustees for Ace Space in Newbury,

supporting the venue's role as a hub for grassroots arts and community creativity.

Maia currently directs two choirs with distinct identities. Soul Reason is a contemporary performance choir that works regularly with a live band and performs at concerts and public events. Community Soul is a one-day pop-up choir created to be inclusive, uplifting, and accessible, offering singers the chance to come together for a shared musical experience without pressure or expectation. Both projects reflect Maia's commitment to high musical standards within spaces that feel welcoming, supportive, and inclusive.

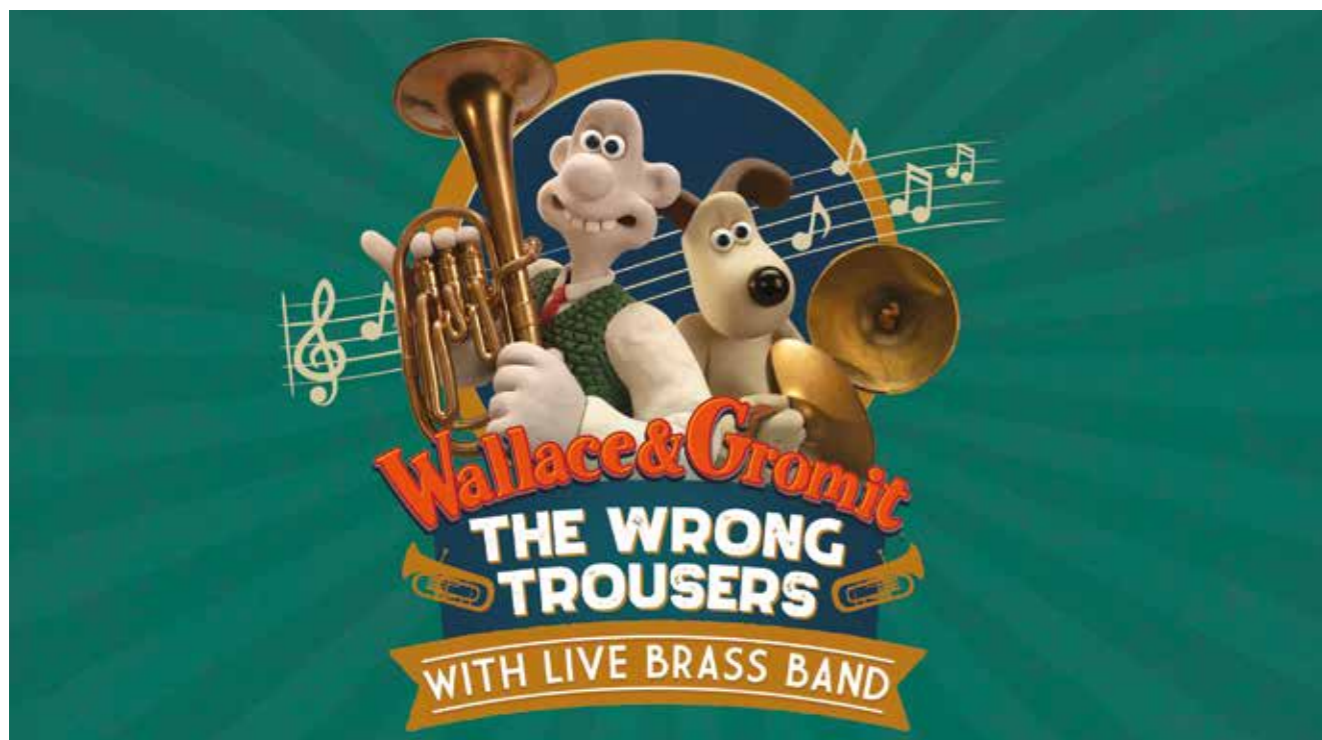
In 2026, Maia is delighted to collaborate with Newbury Spring Festival as musical director of Big Sing Saturday. The event brings together her twin passions for participation and artistry, celebrating choral singing as something that can be both musically rewarding and socially powerful.

Maia's wider practice is informed by her postgraduate study in Vocal Pedagogy and her ongoing interest in singer wellbeing. In 2019, she presented her research, Depression and its Impact Upon the Working Practices of the Professional Singer, at the international Voice Geek Conference, contributing to important conversations around mental health in the performing arts.

Whether leading large-scale participatory projects or directing performance-focused ensembles, Maia's work centres on creating vibrant musical spaces where singers feel connected – to each other and to the music. Her choral work continues to champion the transformative potential of singing together as a shared artistic experience that is joyful, meaningful, and deeply human.

Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers

Wantage Silver Band • Chris King musical director



Nick Park's animated adventure is one of the best-loved British films of all time. Come and experience this fun-filled family favourite on the big screen with a cracking live brass band musical accompaniment!

The Wrong Trousers follows hapless Wallace and his loyal beagle in their battle against evil penguin Feathers McGraw, capped by one of the most thrilling chase sequences in movie history.

This Oscar-winning film boasts a brilliant brass-band soundtrack written by Julian Nott – members of Wantage Silver Band will play it live alongside the movie at this fun-filled family concert.

Wantage Silver Band

Wantage Silver Band is an amateur brass band organisation based in the historic market town of Wantage, Oxfordshire. Comprising eight bands, it is possibly the largest organisation of its kind in the country.

Wantage Band is the highest-ranked of the organisation's three competing bands, performing regularly in concerts and competitions both locally

and further afield. The band competes in the prestigious Championship Section and is conducted by the talented and experienced Chris King. In February this year, he led the band to victory at the Welsh Open Entertainment Contest with their programme *States of Mind*, where they also received awards for Most Entertaining Programme, Best Cornet and Best Baritone.

Not long after this, the band made their annual trip to Stevenage for the London and Southern Counties Regional Championships where they performed the set test piece, *Elgar Variations* by Martin Ellerby. The band were delighted with their third place finish and special award for the Best Trombone Section of the day.

Fresh from performing in the highest section of the British Open Spring Festival in Birmingham, the band now embarks on its summer concert season, beginning here today in Newbury. Other engagements this summer will take the band to Stroud and Marlborough, before concluding at home in Wantage as part of the popular Market Place Brass series.

Jess Gillam Masterclass

Jess Gillam saxophone

Sponsored by The Ambrose and Ann Appelbe Trust



Jess Gillam is a celebrated saxophonist and presenter. With her electrifying performances, vibrant stage presence and magnetic personality, the 'uniquely mercurial' (*The Times*) Jess has been invited to play on the world's major stages since becoming the youngest ever soloist to perform at the Last Night of the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Equally at home behind the microphone, Jess' award-winning weekly show, *This Classical Life*, on BBC Radio 3 is now in its seventh season.

Jess will be working with local young saxophone players who will have the opportunity to learn from her directly.

Jess Gillam Trio

Jess Gillam saxophone • Sam Becker bass • Zeynep Özsuca piano



© Robin Clevley

Repertoire to include:

Nadia Boulanger	Cantique
Corelli	La Folia
Babadjanian	Excerpts from Piano Trio
Gershwin	Liza
Dani Howard	Dancing Shadows
Sidney Bechet	Petite Fleur

Along with her long-time collaborators pianist Zeynep Özsuca and bassist Sam Becker, Jess Gillam, weaves a programme of fantastic lesser-known repertoire with fresh takes on some firm favourites. From Jazz influences with music by composers such as Phil Woods, Sidney Bechet, Barbara Thompson and Rudy Weidoeft to Baroque energy from Corelli to joyous Gershwin and shades of folk, this programme has something for everyone to enjoy.

Jess Gillam

Jess Gillam is a celebrated saxophonist and presenter. With her electrifying performances, vibrant stage presence and magnetic personality, the *uniquely mercurial* (*The Times*) Jess has been invited to play on the world's major stages since becoming the youngest ever soloist to perform at the Last Night of the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Equally at home behind the microphone, Jess' award-winning weekly show, *This Classical Life*, on BBC Radio 3 is now in its seventh season.

Jess is passionate about broadening the repertoire for the saxophone, especially in the classical sphere. Recent commissions include *Glasslands* by Anna Clyne premiered with the Detroit Symphony. Other new works include Dani Howard's Saxophone Concerto, first heard with Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, and Karl Jenkins's *Stravaganza* performed to a sold-out BBC Proms

audience. Jess held the position of Associate Artist of the Royal Albert Hall until 2025 and was an Artistic Partner of Manchester Camerata.

Jess' concerto appearances have included performances with the BBC orchestras, DSO Berlin, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Gothenburg, Iceland, Lahti, London, NDR Elbphilharmonie and Sydney Symphony Orchestra as well as the London, Royal Liverpool and Munich Philharmonic, among others. Further afield, concerto highlights in the US have included the Houston Symphony and Minnesota Orchestra; she will debut with the Lincoln Center Festival Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra in the summer of 2025.

On the recital stage, Jess is seen performing across Europe, the US and beyond. As a former ECHO Rising Star, Jess has appeared throughout Europe's most prestigious concert halls, including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Wiener Konzerthaus, Konzerthuset Stockholm and Barcelona's Palau de la Música. An exclusive recording artist with Decca Classics, Jess is the first and only saxophonist to be signed to the major label. Both her albums have reached No. 1 in the UK Classical Music Charts and her debut album, *Rise*, was listed in *The Times*' Top 100 albums of 2019. Alongside her weekly Radio 3 show, Jess has presented on BBC Radio 2, co-hosted a mini-series on BBC Radio 4's *Today Programme* and presented at the BBC Proms and BBC Young Musician of the Year.

Jess loves collaboration and in 2020, she formed her band, the Jess Gillam Ensemble. Their bold, uplifting and open-minded approach is rooted in classical music but takes inspiration from different musical worlds. Since their launch, the ensemble has performed throughout the UK and Europe to multiple sold-out audiences at venues and festivals including the Wigmore Hall, Latitude Festival, Mozartfest Augsburg and Bath Festival.

In 2016, Jess Gillam made history after becoming the first saxophonist to reach the Finals of BBC Young Musician of the Year. She has been the recipient of a Classic BRIT Award, a *The Times* Breakthrough Award nominee and was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list 2021 for Services to Music. Returning to her roots in Ulverston in Cumbria, Jess continues to promote her own concert series in her hometown, inviting internationally renowned artists, a series she founded at age 12. She is a patron for Young Sounds UK, Music in Secondary Schools Trust, the London Music Fund and is a member of the Council of the Royal Philharmonic Society.

Sam Becker

As an in-demand bass player, musical director and multi-instrumentalist, Sam is equally at home in the studio as he is in concert. He graduated with the Double Bass Prize from the Royal Academy of Music in 2018 and has since enjoyed a busy and varied musical career in the classical arena as well as on the pop stage.

Sam has performed and recorded for artists and orchestras such as Seth McFarlane, Bryan Ferry, the John Wilson Orchestra, The Waeve, VOCES8, Shygirl, Max Richter, David Kushner, Sinfonia of London, Joy Crookes, Alexis Taylor (of Hot Chip), Jordan Rakei, Pulp, The Last Dinner Party, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Northern Sinfonia and the Hallé. Sam is currently the musical director and bass player for Bea and Her Business, a Warner artist who recently sold out her headline show at KOKO and has amassed over 2 million followers on her social media. Sam has also recorded and produced two singles for the Formula 1 Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc.

Sam's former band SUN SILVA had their debut single *Blue Light* featured on the international best-selling game FIFA 19, a game bought by over 20 million people. Their single Sun, Skin, Air can be heard as the first track on the latest series of *Elite* on Netflix.

Zeynep Özsuca

The Turkish pianist Zeynep Özsuca has performed worldwide as a soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. Born in Ankara, she began piano lessons at the age of four and continued her studies at Ankara Conservatory of Hacettepe University. After winning Istanbul Symphony's Young Soloists Competition in 2001, Zeynep moved to the United States to complete a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance at the Oberlin Conservatory under Prof. Peter Takács. She then majored in accompaniment and vocal coaching at Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler", Berlin with Prof. Alexander Vitlin and graduated with an MA in 2013. Zeynep currently lives in London and pursues her career as concert pianist and répétiteur.

Zeynep has worked with conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Simon Halsey, Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Antonio Pappano, and acted as rehearsal pianist for singers Magdalena Kozená, Rolando Villazón, Gerald Finley, Annette Dasch, Michael Schade to name a few. She has been working as a répétiteur and orchestra member with renowned opera companies and orchestras like London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Staatsoper Berlin, Aix-en-Provence Music Festival, Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

As a chamber musician she has performed on prestigious stages including the Berlin Philharmonie, Palau de la Musica Valencia, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Queen Elizabeth Hall as well as live radio broadcasts on Deutschlandfunk, Deutschlandradio, RBB Kulturradio (Germany), RNE (Spain), BBC 3 and 4(UK), alongside co-hosting the BBC Young Musician Podcast. She also regularly appears in concert with her duo partners saxophonist Jess Gillam and clarinettist Sacha Rattle, as well as her wind and piano sextet Berlin Counterpoint.

Zeynep has a close working relationship with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she has acted as accompanist, music director of opera scenes and currently as lecturer of the Opera Skills course.

Philharmonia Orchestra

Alim Beisembayev piano • Adam Hickox conductor

Sponsored by Viking and Highclere Castle



Mendelssohn *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*
Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4
INTERVAL
Brahms Symphony No. 1

Leeds International Piano Competition winner, and BBC New Generation Artist 2023-25, Alim Beisembayev made his debut at the BBC Proms with the Sinfonia of London (John Wilson).

Tonight he joins the Philharmonia Orchestra who celebrate their 80th Anniversary in 2026.

Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto is possibly the most popular, and indeed the most lyrical of the series, which the Festival has been featuring over the past few years, and will be preceded by Mendelssohn's concert overture which was inspired by Goethe's poem of the same name. The concert will conclude with Brahms's triumphant First Symphony which he composed in the shadow of Beethoven's monumental output, finally realising his ambition to create his own orchestral masterpiece.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)
Overture: A Calm Sea and a Prosperous Voyage

Felix Mendelssohn is credited with creating the 'concert overture' – a short, independent orchestral piece, often with descriptive or literary associations, that could replace the commonly-used opera overtures as an effective curtain-raiser. Not only that, but he did so at the age of 17, after a couple of practice shots, with the brilliantly imagined *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture. *The Hebrides*, one of his most perfect works, followed only four years later. Between them came *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt*, first performed in Berlin on 18 April 1828. Mendelssohn himself was to make his first sea voyage the following year – an appalling crossing to London that took from Saturday evening to Tuesday afternoon, through contrary winds, storm and fog, in a steam ship that had to be repaired en route, and during which, as he wrote home, he spent the time 'cursing England and particularly my own 'Meeresstille'".

The music is based on two poems by Goethe that would have been well-known to German audiences, and had been set by Beethoven for chorus and

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orchestra in 1815. There was a personal connection, too; as a boy of extraordinary talents, Felix had been kindly received several times by the 'poet-king' at his home in Weimar.

In these days of beach holidays and cruises, a 'calm sea' is no bad thing; before the advent of powered vessels, however, a becalmed sailing ship could be a deathtrap. In Goethe's poem, *'the fearful boatman sees / A glassy surface all around. / No breeze from any quarter! / Fearful, deadly silence!'* Mendelssohn pictures the scene in slow, sustained string sound, with the sparing use of dark woodwind and brass colours and repetitive, circling melodic fragments.

At last a breath of wind from the flute heralds the arrival of the breeze that will send the ship on its 'prosperous voyage'. The wind picks up in an exciting build-up and chattering woodwind transform the motto of the 'calm' section into the lively theme of a sonata-form Allegro. Cellos announce a new, gentler version of the theme, and an excited tutti subsides via rippling woodwind into a development section evocative of an extensive seascape. A brief recapitulation builds to a climax of thundering drums, and trumpets – who have largely been kept in reserve for this moment – announce the sighting of land. In a final imaginative stroke, the celebrations end with a quiet sigh of relief.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major Op. 58

- 1 Allegro moderato
- 2 Andante con moto
- 3 Rondo. Vivace

Beethoven arrived in Vienna from Bonn in 1792, 'to receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn', as his early sponsor, Count Waldstein put it. For a virtuoso pianist and aspiring composer, the piano concerto was the medium that would carry his name beyond the salons of music-loving patrons. Beethoven had already shown youthful ambitions in an early concerto written at the age of 14 in Bonn, and in Vienna he was soon at work, giving premieres of his first two surviving concertos in 1795. The remaining three concertos now in the repertoire all date from the first half of his time in Vienna – years when he was equally noted as pianist and as composer. After his deafness became too severe for him to take part in Vienna's concert life he wrote no more concertos, for the piano or any other instrument.

The Fourth Piano Concerto was composed in 1805–6, at the heart of a period of astonishing creativity which saw the completion of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, the Violin concerto, the Rasumovsky Quartets, the Waldstein and Appassionata sonatas

and the opera *Fidelio*. Beethoven's notebooks show that these great works – each so strongly individual in character – were written in an overlapping sequence in which he would often be sketching three or four pieces at the same time. The relationship of the first movement of the concerto to that of the Fifth Symphony is striking; both are pervaded by the same short-short-short-long rhythm, but it becomes as gentle in the concerto as it is aggressive in the symphony. Both works were performed at a famous all-Beethoven Akademie (a concert for the composer's benefit) on 22 December 1808. The four-hour marathon also included the Sixth Symphony, the aria *Ah perfido*, the Gloria and Sanctus from the Mass in C and the Choral Fantasia. The audience sat for four hours 'in the bitterest cold', as one of Beethoven's patron Prince Lobkowitz's guests reported, 'and experienced the truth that one can easily have too much of a good thing – and still more of a loud'.

This is the earliest concerto in which the soloist takes the stage at the very outset – and not with a sharply defined subject, but with a phrase of improvisatory freedom which the strings answer from a magically remote chord before proceeding with the first subject proper. The subtlety of this opening exchange establishes a relationship of particular sensitivity between soloist and orchestra which persists throughout the movement. The reflective character of the piano part also inspires its entry after the opening tutti and the rhapsodic new melody which appears a little later. But there is no lack of brilliance at other times. The development consists of around fifty bars of delightfully varied passages, during which the orchestra goes on quietly mentioning the principal motifs of the movement.

The slow movement is unforgettably bold and simple in concept, and so obviously dramatic and so subtly shaped that no later composer could possibly do anything similar. Woodwind, brass and timpani are silent witnesses to the scene, as the strings, hammer out a challenge in a single line of aggressive octaves. At first, Beethoven's instructions are insistent: 'always staccato', 'always forte'. The piano responds with total composure, gradually wooing the strings into compliance in phrases repeatedly marked 'singing' and 'expressive'. The exchanges become briefer, the strings more subdued, until eventually the piano relaxes into an ecstatic cadenza. The strings return gently in the final bars, with cellos and basses keeping a distant memory of the former conflict.

The Rondo picks up the last note of the Andante, harmonising it first as chord, apparently in the wrong key (C major, in a work in G) then picking out a rhythm and finally dancing into a tune that takes us into the home key. The second movement's opposition between orchestra and piano has now

turned into a game of catch but the high spirits are set aside in a pensive episode. Energy returns in full measure in a development that foreshadows Mendelssohn in its light touches of woodwind instrumentation. As in many other works, Beethoven throws much of the weight of the movement, and many of its surprises, into a long coda. During bold modulations to such unexpected places as E flat and F sharp major, and with many varied details in the relationship between soloist and orchestra, both the first and second theme appear in many guises before a short cadenza and animated Presto sweep the work to its conclusion.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Symphony No. 1 in C minor Op. 68

- 1 Un poco sostenuto – Allegro
- 2 Andante sostenuto
- 3 Un poco Allegretto e grazioso
- 4 Adagio – più andante – Allegro non troppo ma con brio

Brahms' First Symphony was the work that, more than any other, broke the spell laid on the symphony by Beethoven and inaugurated the late romantic flowering of the genre in such hands as Dvorak, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Elgar and Sibelius. 'Seldom, if ever,' wrote the contemporary critic Eduard Hanslick, starting his review of the symphony, 'has the entire musical world awaited a composer's first symphony with such tense anticipation'. Brahms was well aware of how much was at stake. His first sketches for a symphony in D minor (the key of Beethoven's Ninth) dated back to 1854; that work had turned into the D minor Piano Concerto. By 1862 he had drafted the first movement of the C minor symphony, though without its mighty introduction; another fourteen years were to elapse before the work was completed to his satisfaction. As well as what he referred to as the unnerving 'tread of the giant [Beethoven]' behind him, Brahms had to contend with the expectations of a public divided between the supporters and detractors of the new German School of Liszt and Wagner. Brahms had incautiously expressed his opposition to their aesthetic principles and found himself forced into the position of standard-bearer for the conservative faction. The sound of Brahms' music has become so familiar that it is easy to forget that at the outset it was considered (as the organist and composer Reger put it in 1894) 'somewhat incomprehensible to the average audience'. For behind the evidently romantic tone of the music lie feats of contrapuntal technique, a Protean command of chromatic harmony and an extraordinary thematic concentration.

At the outset, the audience is confronted by one of the most arresting openings of any symphony – a pressure-cooker of harmonic tension kept boiling by the pounding of timpani, basses and double bassoon. This and the ghostly half-themes that follow contain all the material to drive the stormy Allegro that ensues. Moments of repose come only in the quiet sections featuring pastoral calls between clarinet and horn. In the development section, the music builds twice from sinister depths to massive climaxes dominated by four-note rhythms recalling Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Finally the storm subsides, and the terror of the opening is reduced to a distant rumble.

The Andante opens as a melodious serenade though (in an afterthought added after the first performance) a tense chromatic phrase from the first movement still makes an appearance. The expansive second theme is given to the oboe and, after a richly rescored version of the opening, returns as a duet for horn and solo violin, which carries the movement to an ethereal close. The third movement is a lightly-scored intermezzo full of delightful wind colours and capped in the Trio by a few bars of incisive trumpet tone.

As the fourth movement starts we realise that there is still much drama in store, with timpani rolls, dark accents, tense chords, strange skeletal pizzicato forays and sudden outbursts from the strings. In one of the iconic moments in symphonic literature, the clouds lift with a glorious horn melody, originally sketched in the Alps and sent by Brahms on a postcard to his dear friend Clara Schumann. In its midst lies a single solemn phrase for trombones and bassoons. The vision gives way to a four-square melody that, for all its restraint, is full of joyous feeling – Brahms marked it *con brio* and commented that 'any jackass' could see the likeness to the finale of Beethoven's Ninth. Amidst a wealth of energetic ideas derived from the introduction and shaped into a unique structure, the *con brio* theme, the Alpine horn call and the 'solemn' phrase each make a powerful reappearance before the music winds up to its triumphant close.

© Philip Young 2026



Alim Beisembayev

Alim Beisembayev rose to international prominence after winning First Prize at The Leeds International Piano Competition in 2021 with a performance of Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* alongside the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Andrew Manze. He was also awarded the medici.tv Audience Prize and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society Prize for Contemporary Performance.

In 2023, Alim became one of the highlights of the BBC Proms when, with just two days' notice, he stepped in to perform Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto with Sinfonia of London and John Wilson. The performance was hailed as '*the kind I thought we could hear only in our dreams*' (*iNews*, Jessica Duchon) and described by BBC Radio 3's Georgia Mann as '*a star is born*'. Later that season he received the prestigious Critics' Circle Young Artist Award 2024.

Highlights of the 2025–26 season include debuts with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Jamie Martin), Philharmonia (Adam Hickox), Ulster Orchestra (Tom Fetherstonhaugh), Gävle Symphony Orchestra (Christian Reif), Belgrade Philharmonic (Julio Garcia Vico) and Macedonian Philharmonic (Emil Tabakov). He also returns to BBC Philharmonic Orchestra (John Storgårds), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (Kirill Karabits) and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Domingo Hindoyan).

Recent seasons have seen Alim give the world premiere of Eleanor Alberga's Piano Concerto with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, prompting *The Telegraph* to write: '*there's no pianist under 30 in the world I would rather hear*'. He has also appeared with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (Tchaikovsky No. 1), Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra (Tchaikovsky No. 1), Sinfonietta Cracovia (Mozart No. 20) and Janáček Philharmonic, Ostrava (Ravel, Concerto for the Left Hand), among others.

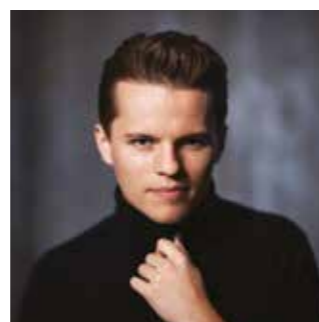
As a recitalist, Alim has performed at major venues and festivals worldwide, including the BBC Proms, Queen Elizabeth Hall (Southbank Centre), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Wigmore Hall, Seoul

Arts Centre, Carnegie Hall, Victoria Concert Hall (Singapore), Chopin Institute (Warsaw), Oxford Piano Festival, Fondation Louis Vuitton (Paris) and Cliburn Concerts. He has toured Europe with the Steinway Prizewinner Concerts Network and South Korea with the World Culture Network.

His debut recording, Liszt's 12 Transcendental Études, was released on Warner Classics in 2022 to critical acclaim.

Born in Kazakhstan in 1998, Alim began his musical education in Kazakhstan and Russia before continuing at the Purcell School for Young Musicians in the UK. He won numerous awards as a young pianist, including at the Junior Van Cliburn Competition in Fort Worth, Texas. A major part of Alim's musical training was under the guidance of Tessa Nicholson, with whom he studied from the age of 14 and throughout his studies at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2023, he completed both a Master of Performance and an Artist Diploma at the Royal College of Music under the guidance of Professor Vanessa Latache.

Alim has been generously supported by numerous scholarships, including from the Imogen Cooper Music Trust, ABRSM, Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Hattori Foundation, Drake Calleja Fund and Talent Unlimited.



Adam Hickox

British conductor Adam Hickox is praised repeatedly for his expressive and masterful interpretations and is in increasing demand across the world. Following a highly successful run of performances of *L'elisir d'amore*, Adam was appointed Principal Conductor of The Glyndebourne Sinfonia in December 2023, following a long line of distinguished predecessors. In November 2024, just a few months after making his debut with the orchestra, Adam was announced as the new Chief Conductor of the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, starting in 2025/26.

Equally at home in the opera and symphonic fields, his 2024/25 season included debuts with Staatsoper Hamburg (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Dresdner

Philharmonie, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, Deutsche Radiophilharmonie, London Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National, Bournemouth Symphony orchestras, Orchestre National de Lille, Trondheim Symphony, a tour of Holland with Phion and his Asian debut with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.

In previous seasons he has conducted orchestras such as the Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonieorchester Berlin, Philharmonia Orchestra and BBC Symphony, and acclaimed opera productions with Norwegian National Opera (*Candide*) and Opera North (*Tosca*).

Adam studied music and composition with Robin Holloway at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and conducting with Sian Edwards at the Royal Academy of Music. He was Assistant Conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2019–2022 working closely with Lahav Shani, and in 2021 he was invited to Tanglewood as one of the Festival's two Conducting Fellows.

The Philharmonia Orchestra

Founded in 1945, the Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras.

Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali took up the baton as Principal Conductor in 2021, and Marin Alsop joined him as Principal Guest Conductor in 2023. They follow in illustrious footsteps: Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Ricardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Christoph von Dohnányi, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Esa-Pekka Salonen are some of the key figures who have honed the renowned Philharmonia sound over eight decades.

The Orchestra has premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Kaija Saariaho, Errollyn Wallen, Laufey and many others, and performs with many of the world's most admired soloists.

The Philharmonia thrives on creative collaborations: in the 2025/26 season, pianist Víkingur Ólafsson is Featured Artist, Gabriela Ortiz is Featured Composer, and dance, mime, theatre and drag artists Thick & Tight are Artists in Residence.

The Philharmonia is resident at the Southbank Centre in the heart of London, and also holds residencies in Basingstoke, Bedford, Canterbury and Leicester, at Garsington Opera and at the Three Choirs Festival. In each of these residencies, the Orchestra is deeply embedded in the community. Projects with primary and secondary schools, children in foster care, people living with dementia

and their carers, young people learning instruments, and adults who face barriers to experiencing the arts, all testify to the many ways music enriches our lives.

This season the Philharmonia celebrates its 80th birthday with initiatives including offering 80 free tickets for first-time bookers to every concert in its London season; recruiting a team of 80 volunteers to help provide a warm welcome; reaching 80 schools with Orchestra Unwrapped, its programme of schools' concerts and teacher training; and establishing Philharmonia Social, a chance for audience members to meet and find out more about the orchestra.

The Philharmonia tours extensively throughout Europe and has performed in China, Colombia, Japan, Mauritius and the United States. In October 2025 the Orchestra embarks on a major US tour, culminating in two performances at Carnegie Hall. The season also includes a tour of Korea, and performances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Musikverein in Vienna, and many other leading European venues.

The Philharmonia is known for embracing innovative technology. The Orchestra's recordings include benchmark LPs, more than 150 film and videogame soundtracks, and streamed performances. Its recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 is travelling through interstellar space on board the Voyager spacecraft, and its immersive installations and virtual reality (VR) experiences have introduced many thousands of people to orchestral music. The Philharmonia Records label was established in 2023. The Orchestra has released live recordings of major works by Strauss, Mahler, Stravinsky and Shostakovich, with Santtu at the helm. The Philharmonia's Emerging Artists Programme nurtures and develops the next generation of instrumentalists and composers, with a focus on increasing diversity within the classical music industry.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity. It is proud to be supported by Arts Council England and grateful to the many generous individuals, businesses, trusts and foundations who make up its family of supporters.

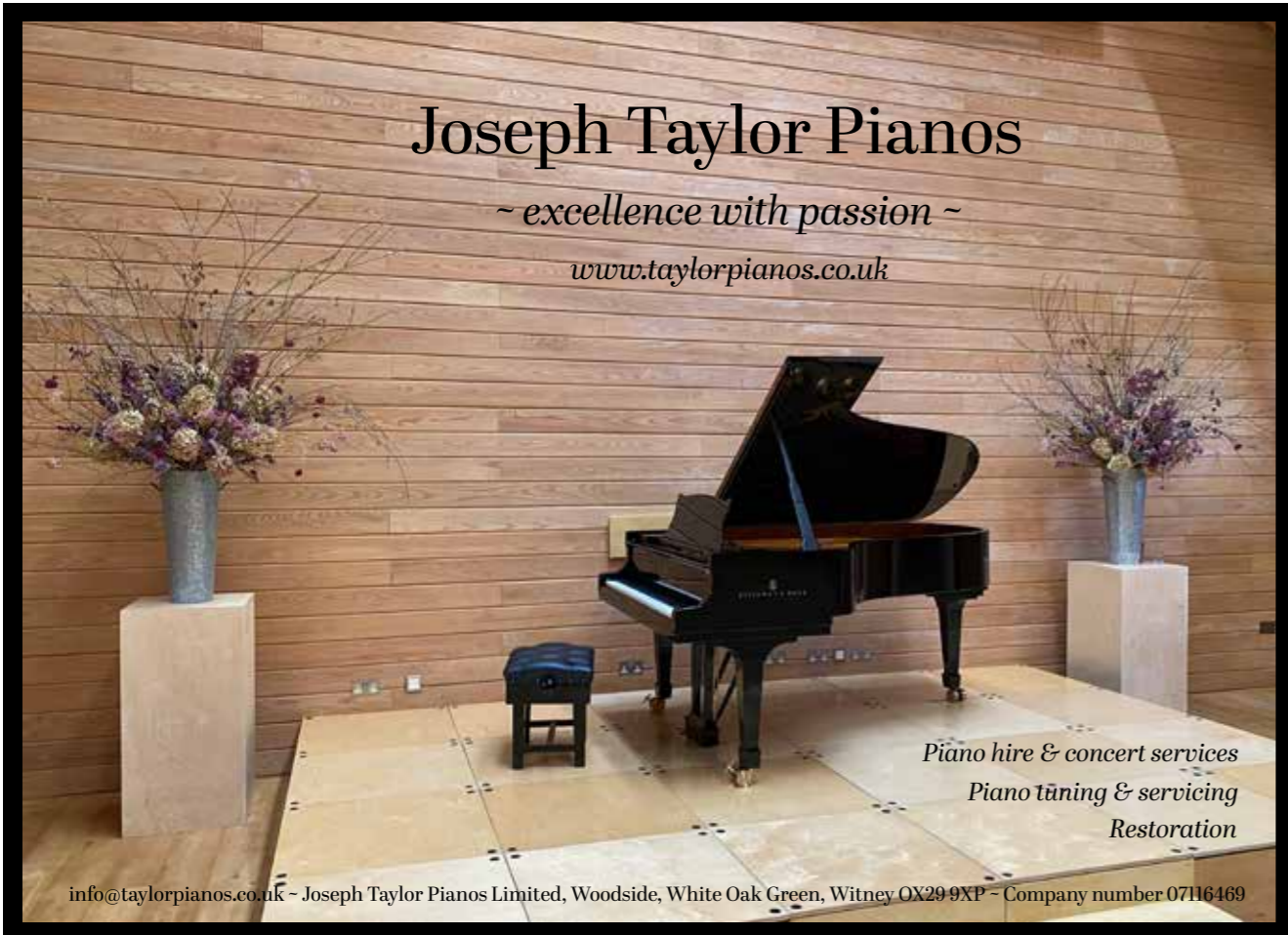


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Soul in the Market Place

Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir

Clarence Hunte choir director

Sponsored by Greenham Trust



Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir is one of the country's leading gospel choirs, committed to creating contemporary gospel of the highest standard and performing it as widely as possible, especially in the places where gospel's power to raise the human spirit is most needed. They are famous for their free monthly outdoor performances at St James's Piccadilly which attract huge crowds.

Ahead of their afternoon performance in the Corn Exchange (see page 126), they will bring to Newbury Market Place a short open-air set to give a flavour of what they will be performing later in the day. Joining them will be some of the students they will be working with as part of the Festival Education Programme (see page 204), with a performance of songs they worked on ahead of the Festival.

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Sheepdrove Piano Competition Final

Jury

**Rupert Christiansen • Mark Eynon • Mikhail Kazakevich
Lucy Parham • Frederick Scott**

Sponsored by The Sheepdrove Trust



A wonderful opportunity to hear the best international piano students drawn from all the major UK conservatoires – and to cast your vote for the audience prize!

This notable competition, established by the Sheepdrove Trust, is open to candidates aged 26 and under from the eight major UK music colleges, and attracts young pianists of the highest standard from around the world. Today's competition, which this year has an emphasis on Prokofiev, features four shortlisted finalists and takes place in the tranquil setting of Sheepdrove on the Lambourn Downs. The overall winner will perform a solo recital in the Corn Exchange on Monday 18 May as part of the Festival's popular Young Artists Lunchtime Recital Series (see page 133).

1st Prize:

The Kindersley Prize of £3,000 plus a recital on Monday 18 May.

2nd Prize:

£1,500 donated by Greenham Trust.

3rd Prize:

£750 donated by the Friends of NSF.

4th Prize:

£500 donated by an anonymous donor.

Audience Prize:

£250 donated by an anonymous donor.

Robert Turnbull Memorial Prize:

£750 to a runner up from either round.



Rupert Christiansen

Rupert Christiansen was dance critic for *The Mail* on Sunday and opera critic and cultural commentator for the *Daily Telegraph* from 1995 to 2020. He is currently Collaborating Research Scholar at Keble College, Oxford and dance critic for *The Spectator*, as well as the UK and Europe Director of the Robert Turnbull Piano Foundation, devoted to helping classical pianists at the start of their careers. As well as making regular contributions to many magazines and journals, he is the author of a dozen works of modern cultural history, including *Romantic Affinities* (winner of the Somerset Maugham Prize) and *Paris Babylon*. His childhood memoir *I Know You're Going to be Happy* won the Spear's Prize in 2011. His latest book is *Diaghilev's Empire: How the Ballets Russes Enthralled the World*, which was published by Faber in September 2022. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1997.



Mark Eynon

Mark graduated from Cambridge University in 1978 with a degree in English, and after working as an assistant on various opera productions, his festival career began in 1983 when he was invited to create the first Henley Festival, which he ran for nine seasons. He became director of Salisbury Festival in 1987, establishing a cycle of annual festivals based on the four elements, and in 1992 he was appointed artistic associate of the European Arts Festival, a national celebration to mark Britain's presidency of the EC.

Mark's association with Covent Garden began in 1989 when he was appointed Assistant to the General

Director of the Royal Opera House, and in 1993 he became director of the first BOC Covent Garden Festival, a new festival of opera and musical theatre, which under the patronage of Diana Princess of Wales he ran for three seasons. As a consultant he worked on two major opera galas at the Royal Opera House: in 1991 the Mozart Bicentenary Gala, and in 2006 the Mozart 250th Anniversary Gala, both conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner. From 2008 to 2018 he was the British representative on the jury of the annual singing competition Concours International de Chant des Châteaux en Médoc.

As a freelance producer, Mark has produced many events including the revived Chelsea Arts Balls at the Royal Albert Hall, and Britain's largest nativity play, the Wintershall Nativity. As a response to his deep interest in the spiritual and psychological effects of music, Mark founded a new festival, Healing Sounds, an international celebration of the healing powers of music, which took place in Brighton from 1997–2002 and was part of the national Millennium Festival.

In 2013 he established and co-directed the London-wide festival, Wagner 200, which celebrated Wagner's bi-centenary in association with some of London's leading arts organisations including the Royal Opera House, Royal Festival Hall, Kings Place, British Library and Barbican Centre, with Philharmonia, BBC Symphony and London Symphony Orchestras.

Mark has been the Festival Director of Newbury Spring Festival since 1999 and established the associated Sheepdrove Piano Competition in 2009.



Mikhail Kazakevich

Born in Nizhny Novgorod (Russia), Mikhail Kazakevich studied at the city's State Conservatoire with the famous Soviet pianist and teacher Isaak Katz, who was a pupil of the legendary professor Alexander Goldenweiser. Immediately after graduating with the highest honours, Mikhail joined the professorial staff at the conservatoire, and taught there until 1992, when his burgeoning performing career brought him to the West.

As a result of great success at the International Schubert Competition in Dortmund (Germany), he was engaged to play several concerts with the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra, and also gave numerous solo recitals in Germany and France: he received a Special Award from the Schubert Society (Germany) and a Special Prize from SACEM (France), for his performance of 20th century music. In 1993, Mikhail made his debut at the Wigmore Hall (London) and soon afterwards was signed exclusively to the BMG/Conifer recording label, for which he has made numerous internationally acclaimed recordings. These include works by Bach, Beethoven (the world premiere recording of the composer's final versions of the Second and Fourth concertos, with the English Chamber Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras), Berg, Chopin, Mahler (Kazakevich's own arrangements), Rachmaninov, Schubert and Schumann.

Mikhail has played solo and with orchestras at prestigious venues and festivals in Austria, Germany, France, Russia, Switzerland, Denmark, South Korea and the Middle East. He performed with such conductors as Charles Mackerras, Vladimir Spivakov, Alexander Dmitriev, Moshe Atzmon, Thomas Sanderling. In the United Kingdom, he has given numerous recitals at famous venues, including London's Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, and the South Bank Centre and has made many live broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and BBC1 Television. He regularly performs at Brighton and Newbury Spring Festivals, St. George's (Bristol), Chopin Society (Westminster Cathedral Hall) and often returns to Russia to play solo and chamber music recitals.

Mikhail has been passionately combining his intensive concert activities with teaching. In the UK, he started his teaching career at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Cardiff). Since 2005, he is Professor of Piano at Trinity College of Music (London). He is also a visiting Professor at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and frequently gives masterclasses and adjudicates at the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Yehudi Menuhin School (Winter Music Academy for young Malaysian musicians), Dartington International Summer School, BYMT Summer International Piano and Composition School, the University of Aberdeen, Jordan National Conservatoire and the Art Centre in Newport. Mikhail has been a jury member at a number of international piano competitions including those in Newport, Dudley, Hastings and Windsor.



Lucy Parham

Acknowledged as one of Britain's finest pianists, Lucy Parham applies her sensitivity and imagination not only to concertos and recitals, but also to portraits in words and music of such composers as Schumann, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Liszt and Debussy.

Her life-long passion for the music of Schumann inspired the original concept of the words and music evening, *Beloved Clara*. Two further evenings, *Liszt – An Odyssey of Love and Nocturne – The Romantic Life of Frédéric Chopin* also premiered in the London Piano Series at the Wigmore Hall. Her fourth programme, *Rêverie – the Life and Loves of Claude Debussy* was also premiered at the Wigmore Hall London Piano Series. This was followed by *Elégie – Rachmaninoff, A Heart in Exile*.

Her latest show, *I, Clara* premiered in 2019 and was chosen by BBC Radio 3's Record Review as CD of the Week. The CD recordings of all six her unique Composer Portraits have all been released to critical acclaim. The actors that narrate these concerts include Dame Harriet Walter, Sir Simon Russell Beale, Alex Jennings, Patricia Hodge, Edward Fox, Henry Goodman, Juliet Stevenson and Tim McInnerny.

Lucy has made numerous other CD recordings, including Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (RPO/EMI Gold), concertos by Ravel, Fauré and Franck (RPO records) and a solo Schumann CD (ASV). Her CD of Clara and Robert Schumann Concertos (BBC CO/Sanctuary) won the BBC Music Magazine Critics' Choice of the Year.

She first came to public attention as the Piano Winner of the 1984 BBC Young Musician of the Year. Since her Royal Festival Hall concerto debut at the age of 16, she has played throughout the UK as concerto soloist with most of the major British orchestras and is a frequent recitalist at the Wigmore Hall. She has also toured the USA with the BBC Concert Orchestra on their 50th anniversary, as well as Mexico and Turkey with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with whom she has now given over 60 performances. Abroad, she has toured with the Russian State Symphony,

Sofia Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Polish National Radio SO and L'Orchestre National de Lille.

Lucy also appears frequently as a broadcast presenter and guest on BBC Radio 3 and 4 and BBC TV. She was invited to be the Director of the 2006 Schumann Anniversary Festival at Cadogan Hall and the Director of Schumann 200 Festival at King's Place in 2010. She has presented four series of Kings Place Coffee Concerts (Word/Play) and in 2017/18 her second Sheaffer Matinée series (all of her Composer Portraits) took place at St Johns Smith Square.

Lucy is a Professor of Piano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London



Frederick Scott

London-born Frederick Scott studied piano with Florence Creighton, composition with Justin Connolly and thereafter won multiple prizes and awards during his time at the Royal Academy of Music. After making his debut with Beethoven's Emperor Concerto while still a student, he has performed widely in the UK, Europe, USA and Australia. His music has been performed in such noted venues as the Southbank, Wigmore Hall, Alexandra Palace, Royal Court Theatre, St. John's Smith Square, Fairfield Halls and Sydney Opera House. He has worked in the commercial music sector recording and broadcasting for various media including BBC, ITV and Channel Four.

Having been dedicated to music education for over 40 years he is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and currently conducting PhD research at City St. George's, University of London into *Musical, Literary, Philosophical, Spiritual Syncretism and Synthesis in Ferruccio Busoni's Doktor Faust*.

Recent work has been published by Routledge, Musikproduktion Höflich, SRIA (London), Soundpractice Music and Piano Professional Magazine with other materials in preparation. Frederick practices Forensic Musicology and is a Cardiff University Bond Solon Certified Expert Witness.

Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir

Clarence Hunte choir director • **Peter Yarde Martin** piano / band lead
Andre Gabriel bass • **Joseph Malone** drums

Sponsored by The Greenham Trust



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Spiritual, arr. In His Presence Gospel Choir
Byron Cage
A'Leithia Sweeting, arr. Trey McLaughlin
Anthony Brown & group therAPy
Jackie Wilson arr. Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir
Adele, arr. Sunday Service Choir
The Clark Sisters
Judith Christie MacAllister

INTERVAL

Richard Smallwood
Kirk Franklin
Fred Hammond
Mark Beswick, Jackson 5
SWV, arr. Sunday Service Choir
Nolan Williams Jr, arr. Aeolians of Oakland University
Kari Jobe / Elevation Worship, arr. SSGC
Chaka Khan
Sister Act 2

Ride on King Jesus
The Presence of the Lord is Here
Let Praises Rise
Everyday Jesus
Higher & Higher
Easy On Me
Amazing Grace
Jubilation Medley

Total Praise
Lovely Day
We're Blessed
Lord I Lift Your Name
Rain
Take It to the Lord in Prayer
The Blessing
Ain't Nobody
Joyful Joyful

Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir (SSGC) is a London-based gospel choir, on a mission to spread a message of faith, hope and love through gospel music; to create performances full of life affirming joy and soulful celebration, collaborating with a diverse range of like-minded churches, charities and communities.

Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir

Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir (SSGC) is a London-based gospel choir committed to creating contemporary gospel of the highest standard and performing it as widely as possible, especially in the places where gospel's power to raise the human spirit is most needed.

Since the choir was founded in 2005, SSGC's mission is to spread a message of faith, hope and love through gospel music; to create performances full of life-affirming joy and soulful celebration, collaborating with other artists and art forms; and to support and work with a diverse range of like-minded churches, charities and communities.

SSGC has had the privilege of performing and ministering on many stages – whether intimate settings such as regular church services and events at St James' Piccadilly and St Martin-in-the-Fields, prison ministry or performing to larger live audiences at Christian festivals such as Greenbelt and Big Church Day Out.

SSGC's reach also goes further into the world of studio recording, film and TV. As well as starring in their own production of *The Night Watchmen's Nativity* aired on Sky Arts in December 2020, SSGC has provided vocals for the Rambert dance company's production of *Note To Self* in 2021, the 5th Anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2022, the 2022 M&S Christmas ad campaign, the TV series *The Chelsea Detective*, the feature film *Greatest Days* and ITV's *Royal Christmas Concert* alongside Freya Ridings in 2023 and JP Cooper in 2024. SSGC was also chosen by Mica Paris, Britain's premier soul singer, to be her backing choir in the 2023 Festival of Remembrance on BBC1 and on her 2020 maiden gospel album *Gospel*. This year SSGC also had the privilege of collaborating with the London Symphony Orchestra to record an unprecedented new album, *Shout For Joy*, bringing gospel music together with an orchestra in a way never heard before.

Clarence Hunte

Clarence Hunte is a London-based choir director, workshop leader and vocalist. For nearly two decades, he has been a prominent figure in the UK's gospel and contemporary choral scene, celebrated for his dynamic conducting style and ability to inspire singers of all backgrounds. Clarence's voice and leadership have been at the heart of Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir (SSGC) since 2006, cultivating a distinctive ensemble sound marked by warmth, precision, and expressive intensity.



Improving Lives In Our Area

Since 1997, Greenham Trust has been supporting charities, organisations, and community groups across West Berkshire and north Hampshire. Our funding platform, The Good Exchange, connects fundraisers with donors and match funding opportunities in one place, helping local projects make an even bigger impact.

From food poverty and youth services, to mental health, environmental action, and the arts we support a wide range of initiatives that make a real difference. By funding sustainable and community-led solutions, we are able to help local people and organisations work together to create lasting change.

West Berkshire Dementia Hub

West Berkshire Dementia Hub are working in conjunction with Greenham Trust to build a brand new purpose built centre for dementia care, aiming to open in 2028. By 2030, the number of people in West Berkshire with Dementia is projected to increase by 50%. There is an urgent need for an innovative approach to meet this challenge and provide an enhanced level of support for those living with dementia and their families. The mission is to deliver a welcoming hub, which offers a full range of dementia services, integrating health and social care and bringing the community together.

Chris Boulton Memorial Fund

Donations in memory of Chris, our late Chief Executive, can be made via The Good Exchange, using the following link:
<https://app.thegoodexchange.com/project/21236/>
or via the QR provided

All funds donated, including Gift Aid where applicable, will be shared between the following charities:

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- Pelican Cancer Care
- Winchester Hospice

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Dominic Alldis Trio

Dominic Alldis pianist and vocalist • **Andrew Cleyndert** double bass • **Colin Oxley** guitar

Sponsored by Rivar

By kind permission of Jason & Sybille Russell



A selection of classic songs from the Great American Songbook (Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Rodgers & Hart), as well as Noel Coward and Michel Legrand.

Urbane jazz pianist & vocalist Dominic Alldis brings his renowned cabaret-jazz trio to the Newbury Spring Festival in a programme featuring songs by Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Rodgers & Hart and George Gershwin, as well as songs by Noel Coward and Michel Legrand.

The unique combination of piano-bass-guitar evokes the classic 50s and 60s recordings of Nat Cole, Oscar Peterson, Erroll Garner and later recordings by Blossom Dearie and Diane Krall. As well as the interplay of the trio, Dominic's refined vocal styling has been compared to Mel Tormé and Tony Bennett. The evening will combine musical gems with entertaining anecdotes in the style of a New York supper club!

Dominic Alldis

Dominic Alldis has built a unique career over 30 years, spanning the rich and varied worlds of classical music, jazz and cabaret. Equally at home with a conductor's baton, performing with his jazz trio or entertaining audiences from the piano, Dominic's fluency in many different musical genres and flair for bringing them together in a distinctive way puts him in a category all of his own.

His first professional engagements were in the early 1980s in Paris where he lived for five years accompanying singers in the French chanson tradition. Having soaked up the sounds of the Paris, he returned to London in the late 80s as resident-pianist at London's premier jazz-cabaret venue, Pizza on the Park. During a two-year residency he played opposite many of the world's leading jazz and cabaret artists, including legendary jazz pianists Teddy Wilson, George Shearing and Dave McKenna, and cabaret & jazz entertainers Blossom Dearie, Marion Montgomery, Elaine Delmar, Dave Frishberg and Steve Ross. Inspired by their example, Dominic began singing in the early 90s and took his place as the main act at Pizza on the Park, The Pheasantry and other night spots around London. Dominic has recorded several albums in tribute to his songbook heroes, including Noël Coward, Bill Evans and Michel Legrand.

Dominic is a Steinway Artist and an Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Colin Oxley

Colin Oxley was a long-standing member of Stacey Kent's group. He recorded several albums as well as touring worldwide, including appearances at festivals such as Montreux, North Sea, Nice and Vienne, as well as residencies in New York and San Francisco. He is currently a member of Steve Fishwick's Quartet, the Dave Newton Quartet, Alex Garnett's Quartet, Mark Crooks' Quintet, the Back to Basie Orchestra, Simon Thorpe's Swing Band, a duo with Martin Speake, The Skelton/Skinner Big Band, Simon Woolf's Sextet and Eriko Ishihara's Quintet. He also regularly performs with conductor John Wilson and has performed with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Northern Symphonia, CBSO and RLPO. Colin is also a Guitar Tutor at the Guildhall School of Music in London.

Andrew Cleyndert

Andrew Cleyndert has toured with bands led by many of the major figures of British and American jazz, including Bobby Wellins, Don Weller, Red Rodney, Bud Shank, Gene Harris and Annie Ross. In the early 90s he became a member of the Ronnie Scott Quartet and until his recent death was bassist in the groups of British jazz legend Stan Tracey. Andrew and Dominic have been performing together in numerous ensembles since 1985.

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Pauline Pegasus Homes resident

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Piano Competition Winner

Sponsored by The Headley Trust

Young Artists Recital 4

Newbury Spring Festival is delighted to welcome the winner of the 2026 Sheepdrove Piano Competition to the Corn Exchange to perform a recital as part of the Festival's Young Artists Lunchtime Series.

The prestigious competition, now in its 17th Year is open to students from all the major UK conservatoires. The competition was founded in 2009 by the Sheepdrove Trust and is now widely recognised as one of the important national piano competitions. The winning pianist's programme will include works by Prokofiev, this year's featured composer.

Today's recital is an opportunity to hear more of the winning pianist following the competition held at Sheepdrove Eco Centre, Lambourn on Sunday 17 May (see page 122).



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1891 – 1953

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Good Vibes Music Academy Showcase

Steve Christmas director

Sponsored by Berkshire Community Foundation



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- John Rankin Primary School (ukulele group)
- Thorngrove School (choir)
- Kennet School (rock band)
- Lambourn Primary (choir)
- Academy of Vocal Arts (choir)

The Good Vibes Music Academy Showcase is a joyful celebration of the rich and vibrant musical life of our community. This concert brings together local musicians of all ages and backgrounds, highlighting the incredible talent that thrives across our region.

The event stands as a testament to the transformative influence of music education.

From school groups to amateur musicians, adult ensembles, and more, the concert is a true reflection of the diverse and interconnected musical community that we are so proud of. Each group has worked tirelessly to prepare for this moment, and we are excited to share their passion, creativity, and hard work.

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Toby Carr lute • **Benedict Williams** harpsichord

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J. S. Bach arr. Ensemble Augelletti	Sonata No. 5 in C major BWV529 <i>Allegro</i>
Telemann	Sonata No. 1 in A major TWV43:A1 <i>Soave – Allegro – Andante – Vivace</i>
J. S. Bach arr. Ensemble Augelletti	'French Suite' No. 5 in G Major BWV816 <i>Allemande – Courante – Sarabande – Gavotte – Bouree – Loure – Gigue</i>
J. S. Bach arr. Ensemble Augelletti	Sonata in G minor BWV1029 <i>Vivace – Adagio – Allegro</i>
INTERVAL	
Telemann	Sonata No. 4 in G minor TWV43:g1 <i>Andante – Allegro – Largo – Allegro</i>
Pisendel arr. Ensemble Augelletti	Imitation des caractères de la danse <i>Loure – Rigaudon – Canarie – Bouree – Musette – Passepied – Polonois – Presto Concertino</i>
Hasse	Sonata in C major <i>Adagio</i>
Locatelli	Sonata in G major Op. 5. No. 5 <i>Pastoralle</i>
Torelli	Sonata in D minor <i>Presto – Grave – Allegro</i>
Fasch	Sonata in D major FaWV N:D1 <i>Largo – Allegro – Largo – Allegro</i>

Describing Bach's students as '*jewels that brightly burn*', Telemann championed Bach's skill in arranging music to inspire a new generation of musicians as they performed 'under the orange tree' in Leipzig. Through their letters and memoirs, this programme tells the story of Bach's students as they became 'jewels'. The programme includes arrangements of Bach's joyous instrumental music alongside Telemann's stunning 'Paris' quartets, and sonatas and dances by Pisendel, Fasch and Torelli.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Sonata No. 5 in C major BWV 529 First movement – *Allegro*

The 'trio sonata' was a favourite baroque genre, originating in Italy and typically performed by four, not three, players: two melody instruments and a bass line, together with a chordal instrument – harpsichord, organ or lute – that added improvised harmonies. Bach rang many changes on this arrangement; his six organ sonatas, from which this movement comes, are effectively trio sonatas for a single player, with the two upper melodies on manuals and the bass on the pedals.

It is thought that Bach put together the organ sonatas in Leipzig in the mid-1720s, to tone up the organ technique of his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann (born 1710), and – with his usual pedagogical intention – to train him in understanding and writing counterpoint. They include movements reworked from originals for other ensembles (contrapuntal writing of this kind can easily be transferred from one medium to another) and it's entirely within baroque practice to reverse the process and play them using a variety of instruments. The vigorous opening movement of the fifth organ sonata is in 'ritornello' form, with a recurrent theme that signposts the structure within the otherwise constant and intricate running passage work.

George Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) Sonata No. 1 in A major TWV43:A1 *Soave – Allegro – Andante – Vivace*

George Philipp Telemann has the reputation (and the entry in the Guinness Book of Records) as the most prolific composer in history, with over 3000 works to his name, half of these lost or still awaiting discovery. When he showed early promise, his family forbade musical activities, but he practised in secret and had written an opera by the age of 12. He held important positions at Frankfurt and Hamburg, and successfully competed against Bach for the position of Cantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig – until Hamburg after all agreed to raise his salary. Bach and Telemann were on good terms: Telemann was godfather to Bach's son

Carl Philipp Emanuel, who went on to succeed him in the Hamburg post.

Telemann's music continued to be popular throughout Europe during the eighteenth century, and was held up as a model by contemporary theorists. But after the revival of Bach's choral and ensemble music during the romantic period, Telemann was increasingly dismissed as a '*Vielschreiber*' who put quantity before quality. More recently, the charm and variety of his music, combining skilful workmanship with a sensuous pleasure in the sound, has brought it back to the concert hall.

Set in the four-movement form of the 'church sonata', this A major sonata opens with a gentle movement full of ingratiating textures and elegant snatches of melody. A three-part fugue over a running bass forms the basis of the *Allegro*, interspersed with episodes of lighter material and ear-tickling ornamentation. The *Andante* features Italianate intertwining lines at the start and finish, framing graceful solo passages for the three upper instruments. The final movement dances along in relaxed sequences, ringing the changes between lively ensemble writing and decorative solo flourishes.

Johann Sebastian Bach 'French Suite' No. 5 in G Major BWV816 *Allemande – Courante – Sarabande – Gavotte – Bourrée – Loure – Gigue*

The earliest source for Bach's 'French' suites is the autograph score he wrote in 1722–23 for his second wife in her 'Little harpsichord book', the *Clavier-Büchlein vor Anna Magdalena Bach*. Bach just called them '*suites for the harpsichord*'; they were christened 'French' in 1762, twelve years after his death, perhaps because he used some French titles. However, beyond that there is very little in them that is particularly French; rather, the choice and order of dances follows an Italian model, each dance being cast in the customary two repeated sections. The keyboard style is pure Bach, a blend of Italian rhythmic energy, German rigour and French elegance – sometimes in clear-cut counterpoint, sometimes intricate, sometimes intimate and tuneful, and in this suite always in a particularly warm and friendly mood.

The *Allemande* flows gracefully, coloured by some chromatic excursions at the end of each section. The *Courante* is a lively two-part invention that contrasts with the gracious, ornamented *Sarabande*, The melodies of the *Gavotte* and *Bourrée* ride over lively bass lines – scalic in the *Gavotte*, arpeggiated in the *Bourrée*, whilst the *Loure*, the nearest thing to 'French' in the suite, is in the 'style brisé' that simulates the plucked harmonies of a lute or guitar. The greatest

technical challenge that Bach set his young wife comes in the Gigue, a high-spirited three-part fugue that turns its subject upside down in the second half.

Johann Sebastian Bach
Sonata in G minor BWV 1029
Vivace – Adagio – Allegro

There is much scholarly debate about the origins of Bach's three sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord. They may have been written during his time as Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, when his duties focused on instrumental and chamber music, or later at Leipzig, when the virtuoso gamba player Carl Friedrich Abel was living in the city. These sonatas assign the 'trio sonata' format to two players, with one contrapuntal line supplied by the viola da gamba and the other two by the right and left hands of the keyboard player.

The sonata opens with a lively movement featuring the driving short-short-long rhythm, and many other features of harmony and figuration, characteristic of Bach's (much more familiar) Brandenburg concertos, written at Cöthen. The mesmerising central movement is cast in long bars of three slow beats, where the melody seems to be lost in meditation, among the sparse textures of the keyboard. The third movement restores the sense of momentum with a brisk theme on repeated notes, balanced by a secondary theme of expressive phrases. All three parts are involved in lively dialogue, and join in a powerful arpeggio descent to the final note.

Georg Philipp Telemann
Sonata No. 4 in G minor TWV43:g1
Andante – Allegro – Largo – Allegro

Based in Hamburg from 1721 onwards, Telemann not only composed in a fresh and engaging style, but promoted public concerts, encouraged amateur music-making and took an entrepreneurial approach to publication, engraving his own scores and arranging for their distribution in (among other cities) Berlin, London and Amsterdam. In 1730 his international fame led to an invitation to Paris from a group of leading French musicians. Telemann immediately set about composing chamber music for their instruments – flute, violin, viola da gamba, cello and harpsichord. Seven years were to pass before he made the 500-mile journey, but once there the quartets proved to be a great success. With his eye on both the aristocratic and bourgeois clientele, Telemann wrote that 'they won the attention of the ears of the court and the town, and procured for me in a very little time an almost universal renown and increased esteem.'

The G minor sonata opens with a combination of sustained and decorative elements, twice pausing to consider the way forward, and proceeding with graceful dialogue between the instruments. The first Allegro opens with a theme that unfolds on the cello (or viola da gamba – Telemann very practically printed alternative parts for two of the players in his group of sponsors) before being taken up by the other instruments, interspersed with lively episodes. The Largo is a delicate movement that points to the growing contemporary interest in sensibility and 'good taste' in music and conversation. The closing Allegro features a theme that runs through the texture on different instruments and in different keys, circling on the spot before leaping up in a theatrical gesture. A display of showy instrumental writing brings the work to a close.

Johann Georg Pisendel (1688–1755)
Imitation des caractères de la danse
Loure – Rigaudon – Canarie – Bourée – Musette – Passepied – Polonois – Presto Concertino

Johann Georg Pisendel is one of those attractive characters who jump out of the history books as a vibrant personality, central to the network of musicians among whom the 'great' composers of the classical canon lived and worked. He knew personally most of the composers in this programme – and many others, too. He studied violin with Torelli at the court at Ansbach, Bavaria, and met Bach in Weimar in 1709. Recognised as the leading German violinist of his day, Pisendel became Konzertmeister of the court orchestra at Dresden, then the finest instrumental ensemble in Europe. Travel in the retinue of the Elector Frederick Augustus II, included visits to Venice, where he studied with Vivaldi, and (in the company of Locatelli) to Berlin. He worked and corresponded with Telemann; Bach may have had Pisendel in mind in his works for solo violin; Hasse, who also worked in Dresden, commended his grasp of tempo – an important feature of the *Imitation des caractères de la danse*. This is a whistle-stop tour of some of the most popular dance styles of the day – a less 'artistic' selection than those of Bach's 'French' suite, but full of folksy vigour and variety, and capped with a flashy instrumental 'concertino'.

Johann Adolf Hasse (1699–1783)
Sonata in C major – Adagio

Johann Adolf Hasse was born near Hamburg and left Germany in his twenties to work in Italy, where his operas became extremely popular. Later, he divided his time between Italian opera houses and the courts of Dresden and Vienna, where in 1772 the famous musicologist Charles Burney met him and his wife, the *prima donna* Faustina Bordoni. Burney described

Hasse as 'the Raphael of music', universally admired as 'the most natural, elegant and judicious composer of vocal music now alive'. In this slow movement from his C major sonata, Hasse brings the poise and sensitivity of Italian baroque opera to a duet between the two upper instruments, over a typical baroque walking bass.

Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764)
Sonata in G major Op. 5. No. 5 – Pastorale

Pietro Locatelli came from a family of musicians in Bergamo, and worked for various noble houses in Rome before settling in Amsterdam, one of the main European centres for music publishing. In his 'General History of Music' of 1789, Burney reported Locatelli's reputation as a ground-breaking virtuoso – 'he had more hand, caprice and fancy than any violinist of his time' – adding the remark that his music 'excites more surprise than pleasure'. The 'Pastorale' was a popular feature of music at Christmas, drawing on an Italian folk tradition, when peasants with *pifferari* (reed wind instruments) and bagpipes would re-enact the shepherds' adoration of the Christ-child. Locatelli follows tradition in the swaying 'Siciliano' rhythm, drone bass and melody sweetly doubled in thirds, adding a little chromatic spice of his own to the harmony.

Giuseppe Torelli (1658–1709)
Sonata in D minor – Presto – Grave – Allegro

Another much-travelled native of northern Italy, Giuseppe Torelli was born in Verona and began his professional career in Bologna, where he was admitted to the prestigious Accademia Filarmonica and where he is particularly associated with the trumpet music that accompanied the services at the Basilica of San Petronio. Other employments took him to Ansbach, Bavaria (where he taught Johann Pisendel) and to Vienna, before he returned to Bologna in later life.

The two outer movements of this trio sonata illustrate an intermediate stage in the vigorous instrumental style of the developing Italian baroque. There are exuberant driving rhythms, brief triadic and scalic motto themes and constant interplay between the upper parts, all supported by a clear harmonic structure articulated through the simplest of bass lines. The central movement has both grace and seriousness, with a shapely bass line supporting sustained melodic gestures, expressive dissonant suspensions and decorative ornamentation.

Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1758)
Sonata in D major FaWV N:D1
Largo – Allegro – Largo – Allegro

Like Johann Pisendel, Johann Fasch's career weaves in and out of the lives of his better-known contemporaries. He was among the first cohort of young choristers at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, where he taught himself keyboard and composition, modelling himself on the young Telemann, then studying at the city's university. Continuing from school to university, Fasch founded his own semi-professional performing ensemble – a 'Collegium Musicum' on the lines of that run by Telemann and later by J S Bach. After working and studying in various German cities, Fasch became Kapellmeister to the court of Anhalt-Zerbst, where he remained for the rest of his life. None of Fasch's music was published during his lifetime, but he enterprisingly organised a manuscript exchange to spread the work of leading composers, including his own, across Europe. Both Telemann and Bach admired and performed his music.

Fasch played an important part in the transition between baroque and classical styles, and this D major sonata has features of both. It is cast in the baroque four-movement 'church sonata' format, with a slow opening movement: a tuneful, varied opening melody is introduced by each instrument in turn and followed by a freely-evolving design, building through poised 'dotted note' rhythms whilst also introducing contrasting ideas. The first Allegro is buoyant, with a chipper motto theme and easy-going sequential episodes. In the third movement, a rhythmic contrast to the opening, evenly-paced notes are marked to be treated expressively in slurred pairs. The parts often move in parallel thirds – a relaxed alternative to independent counterpoint. The finale is a cheery movement in two repeated sections, with the seeds of classical 'sonata form' in the handling of its themes and keys.

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Monday 18 May • 7.30pm
 St Mary's Church, Kintbury
 RG17 9TR

Ensemble Augelletti

Founded in 2019, Ensemble Augelletti specialises in creating engaging programmes that tell the everyday stories of people living in the 17th and 18th centuries through baroque chamber music. They are known for compelling performances that demonstrate an 'equal capacity for elegant pathos and rip-roaring technical dexterity' (*The Arts Desk*, 2024) and are often praised for 'a profound understanding of their innovative repertoire' (*Charles Hutch Press*, 2024). Ensemble Augelletti were the BBC New Generation Baroque Ensemble (2023-25) and City Music Foundation Artists (2024-26).

Ensemble Augelletti performs regularly on BBC Radio 3 and in arts festivals across the UK including York, London, Brighton and Beverley Early Music festivals.

The Ensemble perform concerts with bespoke programmes in a variety of settings from pubs to universities, primary schools, concert halls, churches, restaurants and gardens and 2026 brings the release of their second album *Jewels that Brightly Burn*.

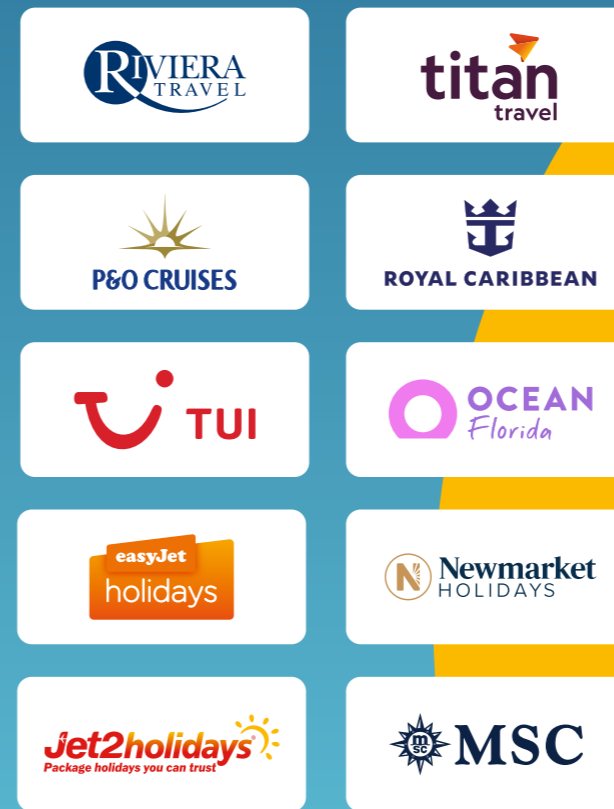
Ensemble Augelletti were finalists of the York International Young Artist Competition and released their debut CD recording entitled 'The Library of a Prussian Princess' on Barn Cottage Records in 2022. Their year-long digital project 'Pick a Card...' paired music with historical playing cards from the British Museum's collection. The project reached more than 60,000 online viewers and it is available to view on their website. Six of Augelletti's projects including CD recordings, concert tours, digital projects and outreach concerts have received generous Continuo Foundation grants since 2020, and their kind support has enabled the development stage of several concert programmes.

Alongside delivering tertiary level masterclasses and side-by-side projects with music college students, Ensemble Augelletti prioritises outreach work with young musicians. In 2025 Ensemble Augelletti delivered a community-focused show 'Baroque Odyssey' at Brighton Early Music Festival, performing alongside community singers and KS1 and KS2 children and they developed KS1 *Georgian Party* workshops and family concerts for Beverley Early Music Festival. Their KS1 outreach programme *Augelletti's Aviary* in collaboration with VOCES8 Foundation launched in September 2024, bringing music to year 2 children from across Hackney and Islington.

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The Echoing Scream: the Birth of Expressionism

Gavin Plumley lecturer



© Theresa Pevall

Gavin Plumley

A writer and broadcaster, Gavin appears on BBC Radio 3 and 4, and contributes to newspapers, magazines and opera and concert programmes worldwide. He lectures widely about the culture of Central Europe. Recent appearances include Klimt and The Kiss in cinemas worldwide, and talks for the Hay and Cheltenham Literature Festivals, the Royal Opera House, the National Gallery, the National Trust, the National Theatre, the British Museum and the V&A.

The Times named Gavin Plumley a 'leading cultural historian'. Known for his work on Central European art and music – through his live lectures at museums, galleries and festivals, in articles for newspapers and magazines, and on radio, TV and film – Gavin's expertise spans various periods and disciplines.

His first book, *A Home for All Seasons*, was published in 2022. Gavin is currently working on his second, *The Gay Apocalypse: Queer Life and Culture in Vienna 1900*, which will be published in 2027 by Constable (Little, Brown) and in German by Molden (Styria Buchverlage).

Born in Dundee in 1981, Gavin is half-Welsh, half-English. He studied music at Keble College, Oxford and lives in Herefordshire with his husband, Alastair Tighe, and their dogs, Nimrod and Scudder.

We're pleased to be joining the Arts Society Newbury for another fascinating daytime lecture. When Edvard Munch created *The Scream* in 1893, he was responding to an intense emotional experience. Today, we would call it a panic attack. Crippling and anxious making, this primal cry was also a rallying call: for Munch and for the wider world of art. It gave birth to a movement known as expressionism, showing life not as it is (realism) or as it might be perceived in a fleeting moment (impressionism), but as it is experienced within the unembellished core of our being.

Explosive and emotive, the aftershocks of Munch's vision were felt across the world: in art and music, literature, dance and film. Charting the origins of expressionism and its historical context, this multifaceted talk embraces artists and thinkers such as Kandinsky, Klee and Schiele, Nietzsche, Freud and Schoenberg, pondering the radical ways in which they both reflected and ignited our inner feelings.

Ballet Central

Central School of Ballet third year dancers
Plus piano accompaniment by Philip Feeney – Tabor Music Director

Sponsored by Mrs Katherine Astor and Mr & Mrs Malcolm Kimmins



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Choreographers:
Ashley Page OBE
Kenneth MacMillan
Monique Jonas
Cameron McMillan

Following a widely celebrated 2025 tour, Ballet Central returns in 2026 with a brand-new company of dancers and a revitalising programme of classical ballet and contemporary dance.

Join us to experience the magic of live dance, showcasing the excellence of Central's next generation of dancers.

The 2026 programme presents one of Kenneth MacMillan's earlier works, *Solitaire*. Revived for Ballet Central by Lynn Wallis, *Solitaire* presents a quirky, dreamlike world told through a montage of nine dances, knitted together by Malcolm Arnold's enigmatic score.

Times Square Ballet, an excerpt from Ashley Page's musical *On the Town*, is sure to delight audiences with its rhythm, glamour and romance. This hectic night of fun reflects the hustle and bustle of the famous Broadway theatre district during the 1940s.

Two exciting new commissions will take to the stage in this year's tour, from distinctive choreographers Monique Jonas and Cameron McMillan. These contemporary works showcase the versatility and flair of Ballet Central's yearly repertoire.

Pavel Haas Quartet

Veronika Jarůšková violin • Marek Zwiebel violin
Šimon Truszka viola • Peter Jarůšek cello

Sponsored by Doves Farm Foods, Dickins Hopgood Chidley and an anonymous supporter



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Schubert Quartettsatz in C minor D 703
Beethoven String quartet in F Major Op. 135

INTERVAL

Schubert String quartet No. 14 in D minor, D 810 *Death and the Maiden*

The Pavel Haas Quartet is revered across the globe for its richness of timbre, infectious passion and intuitive rapport. Playing “as if their lives depend on it” (The Times). Based in Prague, the quartet performs at the world’s most prestigious concert halls and has received numerous high-profile awards for its recordings, firmly establishing them as one of the world’s foremost string quartets.

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For their much-awaited return to Newbury Spring Festival they will offer a programme of popular masterpieces by Schubert and Beethoven.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Quartettsatz in C minor D 703

History places Schubert after Beethoven, who was his senior by 27 years. However, the two Schubert works in this programme actually predate Beethoven’s Op. 135, the last quartet he wrote. The two composers lived not far apart in Vienna throughout Schubert’s short life, but with few publications to his name and even fewer public performances, the shy Schubert had little chance of attracting the attention of his hero. However, Beethoven in his final months was shown some of Schubert’s songs, and admired his ‘divine spark’. The only time they were in the same room was during a visit by Schubert and some friends when Beethoven was on his death bed.

Schubert’s *Quartettsatz*, like his ‘Unfinished’ Symphony, is an incomplete work that has been accepted into the repertoire as a masterpiece in its own right. The two works were written during the same period of his life, the quartet in late 1820 and the symphony in the autumn of 1822 – a turning-point when he appears to have been looking for the means to integrate the emotional intensity of his songs into his previously more conventional instrumental music. Both the symphony and the *Quartettsatz* make a powerful emotional impact in which extremes of tension and lyricism sit side by side. The symphony’s second movement gives the last word to the lyricism; in the quartet, however, Schubert wrote only a few bars of a slow movement, and this single movement, marked *Allegro assai*, ends with the tension unresolved.

The opening idea gives an instant impression of dark foreboding; its agitated gesture passes from instrument to instrument as the music swiftly rises

and as quickly fades. The theme is heard in this form only twice more in the entire movement – once when the first section is repeated and once at the very end, framing the work – but its twisting three-note figure leaves its imprint on almost every bar of the music.

Cornering into a major key, Schubert launches into a soaring melody. Underneath, the three-note figure continues to throb away, creating the kind of tension between melody and accompaniment so typical of his songs. The melody unfolds into ever more extended phrases, only to be interrupted by brutal tremolando chords in the minor key, to which the first violin responds with upward rushing scales. Calm descends, and a new major key is established, with fresh melodies and eventually a lullaby-like rocking of chords, always coloured by the persistent presence of the three-note figure in one instrument or another.

In the development section, the see-saw of tension and relaxation continues, with frequent references to the ‘brutal’ interruption, interspersed with melodies of ever-increasing lyricism. Eventually, just when we might expect to hear the ominous opening theme again, we slide through one of Schubert’s beautiful, unpredictable single-line modulations and find ourselves in the recapitulation of the movement’s most expansive melody. The rest of the material returns, bringing us in due course to the consolation of the major key. Finally, the long-awaited reappearance of the opening theme flings the music back into the minor, and to an abrupt and uncompromising cadence.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) String quartet in F Major Op. 135

- 1 Allegretto
- 2 Vivace
- 3 Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo
- 4 Der schwer gefasste Entschluss.
Grave ma non troppo tratto – Allegro

More than twenty years, and a lifetime of triumphs and (more often) heartbreaks, separate Beethoven’s first set of string quartets (Op. 18) from the astonishing quartets of his last years. In the late 1790s he had been the rising star of his generation, fully aware of his gifts and rapidly making his reputation. Twenty years later, even those who did not appreciate his music recognised him as Europe’s greatest living composer, but his personal life was miserable and impoverished. He was almost totally deaf and, after the death of his brother, obsessed by the responsibility for the education and welfare of his young nephew Karl, whose attempted suicide in 1826 was the last and most serious of a succession of crises. In the wake of the Napoleonic wars, financial support from the aristocracy had dwindled; lawsuits

against his sister-in-law over guardianship of Karl and negotiations with publishers drained his resources. And yet this was the period of the exalted artistry of the Ninth Symphony, the *Missa Solemnis* and the late quartets.

It was probably through the good offices of the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh (who had known Beethoven since his arrival in Vienna, had given him violin lessons and had played his quartets) that Prince Galitzin, a Russian aristocrat and music-lover, wrote in 1823 to request 'two or three quartets', offering whatever fee Beethoven thought appropriate. Unfortunately, the Prince failed to settle two thirds of the fee (he pleaded hard times) and only paid up after a lawsuit after Beethoven's death. In the meantime, his few words had prompted not just two or three, but six quartets. Op. 135, the last of the six, is dedicated not to an aristocrat, but to Johann Wolfmayer, a successful cloth merchant and longstanding champion of the composer, who from time-to-time surreptitiously arranged for a new coat to be made and substituted for Beethoven's worn-out one.

Karl's attempted suicide took place while Beethoven was working on this quartet, and it was finished while they were both staying at his brother's rural estate, while Karl recovered and prepared to join the military. Whether through his enjoyment of the countryside (F major is Beethoven's 'pastoral' key), or relief that Karl's future was looking more settled, or as a creative contrast to the drama of the C sharp minor quartet that preceded it, this is the friendliest of his late quartets. However, at this stage in his life Beethoven cannot be anything other than intellectually demanding and emotionally challenging.

The opening sets the tone for the open textures and the even-handed treatment of the four instruments: fragmentary gestures lightened with grace notes introduce a theme to which the upper three instruments contribute in turn; a new idea is presented in unison; a further idea pits climbing arpeggios against falling cascades of triplets, in a shape familiar from the 'Pastoral' symphony. Beethoven dispenses with harmonic filling, so that if the essence of the music consists of only two lines – as often happens during the course of the central development section – that is all we get, bare though it may sound.

After a comparatively leisurely opening movement, the Scherzo sets off as a frenzied dance, with the instruments dizzyingly out of step with each other; Beethoven is perhaps chuckling at the problems of ensemble he has set Schuppanzigh and his players. The Trio is much longer than the Scherzo, with a sky-rocket of a theme that soars through three octaves and a little rhythmic turn that culminates

astonishingly in a fifty-bar *ostinato* across three octaves under the madly exhilarating dance of the first violin.

The *Lento assai* is marked in Beethoven's sketch-book "Sweet song of rest or peace". Its understated, linear melody, as simple as that of the 'Ode to Joy' in the Ninth Symphony, is followed by four variations. The music flows seamlessly into the first variation but the second is broken up with grief-laden sighs and exclamations. The opening mood returns, with cello and violin now sharing the melody in canon; a final variation, at first marked 'semplice' ('simply'), builds in intensity as the violin phrases move ever higher over a slow-moving bass line.

Beethoven headed the last movement 'The Difficult Decision', writing the question 'Must it be?' over the first three notes of the slow introduction, and the answer – 'It must be!' – over the opening of the Allegro. This seemingly fate-laden question and answer had its origin in a light-hearted incident, when Beethoven had scribbled down a canon to the words '*It must be! Out with your purse!*', addressed to an acquaintance who had failed to subscribe to one of Schuppanzigh's quartet concerts. The Grave opens with exaggerated mock-drama, which soon gives way to the airy high spirits of the Allegro. The spiky motto figure is balanced by a smooth phrase (a new version of the opening of the slow movement), and then by a disarmingly simple tune, introduced by the cello. The music of the slow introduction returns, its question more full of menace than before, only to be blown aside by the return of the Allegro. In an unusually accommodating instruction, Beethoven invites the players to repeat the second part of the movement a *piacere*, 'if you like', before a few *pianissimo* bars of captivating pizzicato and a final *fortissimo* flourish bring Beethoven's last quartet to an end.

Franz Schubert
String quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810
'Death and the Maiden'
1 **Allegro**
2 **Andante con moto**
3 **Scherzo: Allegro molto**
4 **Presto**

Schubert's fourteenth string quartet dates from 1824, four years after the *Quartettsatz*. In the intervening years he had suffered a life-threatening illness – often attributed to syphilis, though the lack of definitive diagnostic tests at the time leaves this uncertain. He had already based two major works around his songs – the *Trout* quintet and the *Wanderer* Fantasy (featured in Barry Douglas' recital on 10 May); his choice of this song as the centrepiece for the quartet surely reflects his illness, and a doom-laden sense of his own mortality.

The song that gives its name to the quartet was written in 1816 to words by Matthias Claudius. *Death and the Maiden* is a brief exchange between a girl (who cries out to Death to keep away) and Death (who gently if ominously introduces himself as a friend), introduced by a haunting passage in Schubert's favourite long-short-short rhythm, suggesting a gradual, sinister approach. Variations based on a song with such powerful associations could only find a place in a serious work; the quartet is not only serious, but intense and disturbing. Beethoven's violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh – no stranger to novel and challenging chamber music – played it, and advised Schubert to stick to his *Lieder*.

The first movement opens with a challenging gesture, and almost immediately sets to working out its aggressive rhythms among turbulent harmonic changes. The second subject, beginning as a duet for the violins, is too uneasy in its rhythm and accompaniment to be reassuring; it is soon joined by rushing semiquavers, and a delicate transformation is swept aside by anguished outbursts. The energy and concentration continue through the violent contrasts of the central development, and into the recapitulation of earlier material. At the end of the movement, the coda explores new areas. A sustained low D on the 'cello introduces a hushed passage interrupted by painful eight-part discords; then the music rises swiftly to a shrill climax and subsides to a slower tempo in a rhythm that brings to mind another image of Death – the statue of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

For the variations that form the second movement, Schubert splices sections of the song into a complete theme in two repeated sections, retaining the powerful shift between grim minor and ominously comforting major which has such an effect in the original song. In the first variation, the second violin takes the melody, whilst the first violin sings plaintively ornamented lines. In the next two variations the crucial long-short-short rhythm appears in progressively shorter notes, first in the viola, accompany the cello's melody, and then furiously, on all four instruments joining in. The fourth variation, in the major throughout, offers a vision of peace, but we are thrown back into emotional turbulence as the minor key returns, with the upper instruments chattering in terror above a relentless bass line. The music subsides and, like the song, closes in the peace of the graveyard.

The brief Scherzo is no light-hearted relief, but a forceful development of its dramatic opening figure, jagged with off-beat accents. The Trio affords some respite, but the rhythm of the scherzo persists in the background.

The Finale has been described as a 'Tarantella of Death'. Its non-stop activity begins with a demonic dance in stark unison. A broad melody, chiming like bells, is in its turn surrounded by swirling quavers. The two long episodes are varied and dramatic, with sudden aggressive interruptions and – after the first return of the theme – startlingly bold swerves in the harmony; this excitable writing adds extra bleakness to each return of the unharmonised theme. Reaching a final *Prestissimo*, the movement rushes in an unabating storm towards its final cadence.

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Pavel Haas Quartet

The '*life-enhancing*' Pavel Haas Quartet (Arts Desk) is revered across the globe for its richness of timbre, infectious passion and intuitive rapport. Playing '*as if their lives depend on it*' (*The Times*), the Quartet perform at the world's most prestigious concert halls and has received numerous high-profile awards for its recordings, firmly establishing them as one of the world's foremost string quartets.

Renowned as the leading interpreter of Eastern European chamber music masterpieces, the Quartet was named as Ambassador for the Year of Czech Music in 2024. From 2025 until 2027, the Pavel Haas Quartet is Artist-in-Residence at Smetana's Litomyšl Festival, alongside the Czech Philharmonic.

The Quartet regularly appears at major venues including Wigmore Hall, London, Philharmonie, Berlin, Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Vienna, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg, Tonhalle Zürich, Philharmonie de Paris, Accademia di Santa Cecilia, BOZAR, Brussels, NCPA Beijing, LG Arts Centre and Seoul Arts Center, Seoul, and Carnegie Hall, New York. In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the Quartet appeared on the cover of *The Strad* and was the featured interview in *BBC Music Magazine*. The latter named it among the '*10 greatest string quartet ensembles of all time*', describing the Quartet as '*stylistically powerful and richly sonorous, [and] known for its passionate and fearless performances*'.

The Pavel Haas Quartet records exclusively for Supraphon. In September 2025, the Quartet released its next album of Martinu String Quartets Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 7. The Quartet has received five *Gramophone* Awards for its recordings of Dvořák, Smetana, Schubert, Janáček and Haas. For its recording of Dvořák's String Quartets No. 12 '*American*' and No. 13, it was awarded the coveted *Gramophone Recording of the Year* in 2011. *The Sunday Times* commented: '*their account of the 'American' Quartet belongs alongside the greatest performances on disc*'.

Tuesday 19 May • 7.30pm
St Lawrence Church, Hungerford
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Since winning the Paolo Borciani competition in Italy in 2005, further highlights early in their career have included being nominated as ECHO Rising Stars in 2007, participating in the BBC New Generation Artists scheme between 2007-2009 and being awarded the Special Ensemble Scholarship by the Borletti-Buitoni Trust in 2010. The Quartet is based in Prague and studied with the late Milan Skampa, the legendary violist of the Smetana Quartet. They take their name from the Czech-Jewish composer Pavel Haas (1899-1944) who was imprisoned at Theresienstadt in 1941 and was tragically killed at Auschwitz three years later. His legacy includes three wonderful string quartets.

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Young Artists Recital 5

Beethoven String Quartet No. 1 in F, Op. 18
arr. Fibonacci Quartet *Moravian Love Songs*
Janacek String Quartet No. 2 *Intimate Letters*

The Fibonacci Quartet are one of Europe's leading young string quartets. Formed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Quartet teach as Quartet in Residence at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama as well as at the Royal Academy of Music in their position as Nina Drucker Fellows. Winners at the 2024 Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) International auditions, they were also recently appointed as Grand Résident ensemble at ProQuartet in Paris for seasons 2025-2027.

This lunchtime recital will combine works by Beethoven and Janacek alongside an arrangement made by the Quartet featuring Moravian Love Songs.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
String Quartet in F, Op. 18 No. 1
1 Allegro con brio
2 Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato
3 Scherzo: Allegro molto
4 Allegro

Beethoven famously left Bonn for Vienna in 1792 with the words of his patron Count Waldstein written in his autograph book and no doubt ringing in his ears: 'You will receive Mozart's spirit from the hands of Haydn'. Mozart had died the previous year; Haydn was very much alive, and the plan was for Beethoven to study with him. Beethoven certainly learned much from the older man's music, but the actual tuition turned out to be a disappointment.

At first it was Beethoven's brilliance as a pianist and improviser that impressed. Success as a composer, however, was his goal; the pattern of his compositions show him setting about Count Waldstein's prophecy with care and determination. To Mozart's work he responded in a spirit of perhaps rash emulation with string trios and the quintet for piano and wind; but when it came to the genres in which Haydn still excelled – the symphony and string quartet – he was more circumspect.

By 1798, Beethoven felt ready to accept a commission for six quartets from Prince Lobkowitz, but three more years passed before they were published. By then he had his first symphony, three piano concertos and some dozen piano sonatas to his name. A first version of the F major quartet had been completed in 1799, when he sent it to Karl Ferdinand Amenda 'as a little remembrance of our friendship'. But in 1801 he wrote again to Amenda: 'Don't let anyone see the quartet, as I have greatly changed it, as only now do I know how to write quartets properly'.

The first movement is dominated by its vigorous opening figure – written and re-written by Beethoven many times before he settled on its final shape and rhythm. It is given some bold harmonic variation before giving way to the gentler phrases of the second subject. Dramatic changes of harmony are again heard in the development, which is almost entirely occupied with exploring the possibilities of the opening idea.

Beethoven said of the second movement that he was thinking 'of the scene in the burial vault at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*'. It certainly paints a highly-charged picture, with its tragically yearning opening theme and emotional silences. The tension is wound higher during the development, and the reappearance of the theme has a rhythmic undercurrent which bursts out with fierce interruptions. The calm second subject is enhanced

on its return by a beautiful transition into D major, but the minor key returns in a coda that almost seems to demand an orchestra for the full realisation of its dramatic effect.

The Scherzo opens with a chromatic theme, reflecting some of the seriousness of the previous movement. But the atmosphere soon lightens, and the trio adds a touch of humour as it picks up a rhythmic figure which sticks persistently to a single note.

The Finale is a sonata rondo with a theme whose swirling opening and chordal reply offer great scope for witty interplay between the instruments. The first episode maintains the light and graceful atmosphere, but the central section, an extended development, introduces some strenuous contrapuntal variations of the theme, alternating with a delightful swaying melody (derived from a subordinate idea in the previous section). After a modified repeat of the first episode, the final statement of the opening theme is extended to lead to an exuberant conclusion.

Fibonacci Quartet
Moravian Love Songs

The Fibonacci Quartet write: Whenever we begin learning a new piece, we explore the wider context of a composer's life to gain an insight into the inspiration behind their work. In Janáček's case, much of his musical language draws from his ethnographic work on Moravian folk tradition.

We therefore decided to conduct our own research into Moravian folk music, which led us to arrange our own set of Moravian folk songs. We were greatly helped in this by Kryštof, who, coming from the Czech Republic, grew up playing and being surrounded by this music.

Arranging music is something we really enjoy as a quartet, and by preceding the Janáček with these folk melodies, we hope to offer a glimpse into the sound world from which Janáček's music emerged.

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)
String Quartet No. 2, *Intimate Letters*
1 Andante – Con moto – Allegro
2 Adagio – Vivace
3 Moderato – Andante – Adagio
4 Allegro – Andante – Adagio

Coming from several generations of Moravian teachers and musicians, Leoš Janáček graduated from the Brno Teacher Training Institute and quickly became involved in the musical life of the city, combining this with periods of study in Prague,

Leipzig and Vienna. Meanwhile he married his former piano pupil Zdenka Schulzová, aged only sixteen, and eleven years his junior. The marriage lasted, in spite of several years of separation, but it was not a success.

The transformation that gave Janáček a unique voice in twentieth-century music started with his intensive research into Moravian folk music, with its irregular metres and rhythms and modal scales. In addition, he studied the intonations of natural speech, which he worked into his melodies. His individual style was first heard in his opera *Jenůfa*. Written between 1894 and 1903, *Jenůfa* was not heard beyond Brno until a triumphant production in Prague in 1916 paved the way for Janáček's international reputation. By then he was over 60; but the next ten years were to be astonishingly productive, including four operas, a mass, several orchestral works and two string quartets. Behind this creativity lay his love for Kamila Stösslová, a married woman 38 years his junior who accepted his attentions and answered his almost daily letters, though she did not return his feelings. 'I know', he wrote to her early in their relationship, 'that my compositions will be more passionate, more rapturous'.

Janáček wrote to Kamila about his second quartet on 1 February 1928, saying, "Now I've begun to write something nice. Our life will be in it. It will be called 'Love Letters'. There have already been so many of those dear adventures of ours, haven't there? They'll be little fires in my soul and they'll set it ablaze with the most beautiful melodies". At that time he had already completed the first movement. Five weeks, and twenty-five letters, later, he writes 'I finished the fair copy of our Intimate Letters. I'm so glad at how my pen was burning when I wrote it!'

The change of title was apt; Janáček writes because he is in love, but it is not all he writes about. His letters, like his music, leap unpredictably from one idea to another, now describing his feelings for Kamila in exalted language, and now discussing conversations with publishers, home improvements or the weather. With constant changes of tempo and texture, extended techniques, extremes of range and speed, and a preference for remote keys, the quartet places huge demands on the players. Janáček originally intended the quartet to include the viola d'amore, the 'viola of love', an instrument with six or seven bowed strings and a set of unbowed 'sympathetic' strings that resonate to give a particularly sweet timbre; however, this was to prove impractical.

The first movement opens with a muscular figure – a self-portrait of the composer? – interrupted by the first sight of Kamila, represented by the viola, playing fragmented phrases in the mysterious 'sul ponticello' tone colour produced by bowing close to the bridge.

The movement continues to alternate between the two ideas, with the 'Kamila' themes gradually becoming more definite and more lyrical, and the responses increasingly excited, rising to an impassioned ending.

The second movement explores a gentle theme with a distinctive rhythm and shape, and builds to a majestic statement before the momentum is suspended for dream-like visions that alternate with hectic dances. At the end of the movement, themes from the opening of the quartet return.

Janáček allows his fantasy a 'suspicion of motherhood' in the third movement. In real life he and Kamila had rarely met, and the long-awaited first kiss still lay in the future, but he imagines her with a child, in the rocking rhythm of a berceuse, and responds with ecstatic joy.

The final movement opens exuberantly, but the music becomes increasingly disturbed. Towards the end, explosive shrieks alternate with moments of lyrical beauty, and the music finally disintegrates into a scattering of trills, high harmonics, pizzicato chords, frenzied figuration and final burst of punched chords. 'What a strange thing,' he wrote to Kamila, 'cries of terror after a lullaby... it's a work carved out of living flesh. I think I won't write a more profound and a truer one'.

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The Fibonacci Quartet

As the only ensemble ever to win both the First and Audience Prize at the Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition in 2024, the Fibonacci Quartet are one of Europe's leading young string quartets.

During the 2025/26 season the Quartet will perform extensively across Europe, with highlights including performances at Vienna Musikverein, Berlin Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Wigmore Hall, Munich Prinzregentheater and Philharmonie de Paris, as well as festival appearances at Edinburgh International Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Heidelberger Frühling Festival and Bad Tölz Winners Summit.

Alongside their busy performing schedule, the Quartet teach as Quartet in Residence at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, as well as at the Royal Academy of Music in their position as Nina Drucker Fellows.

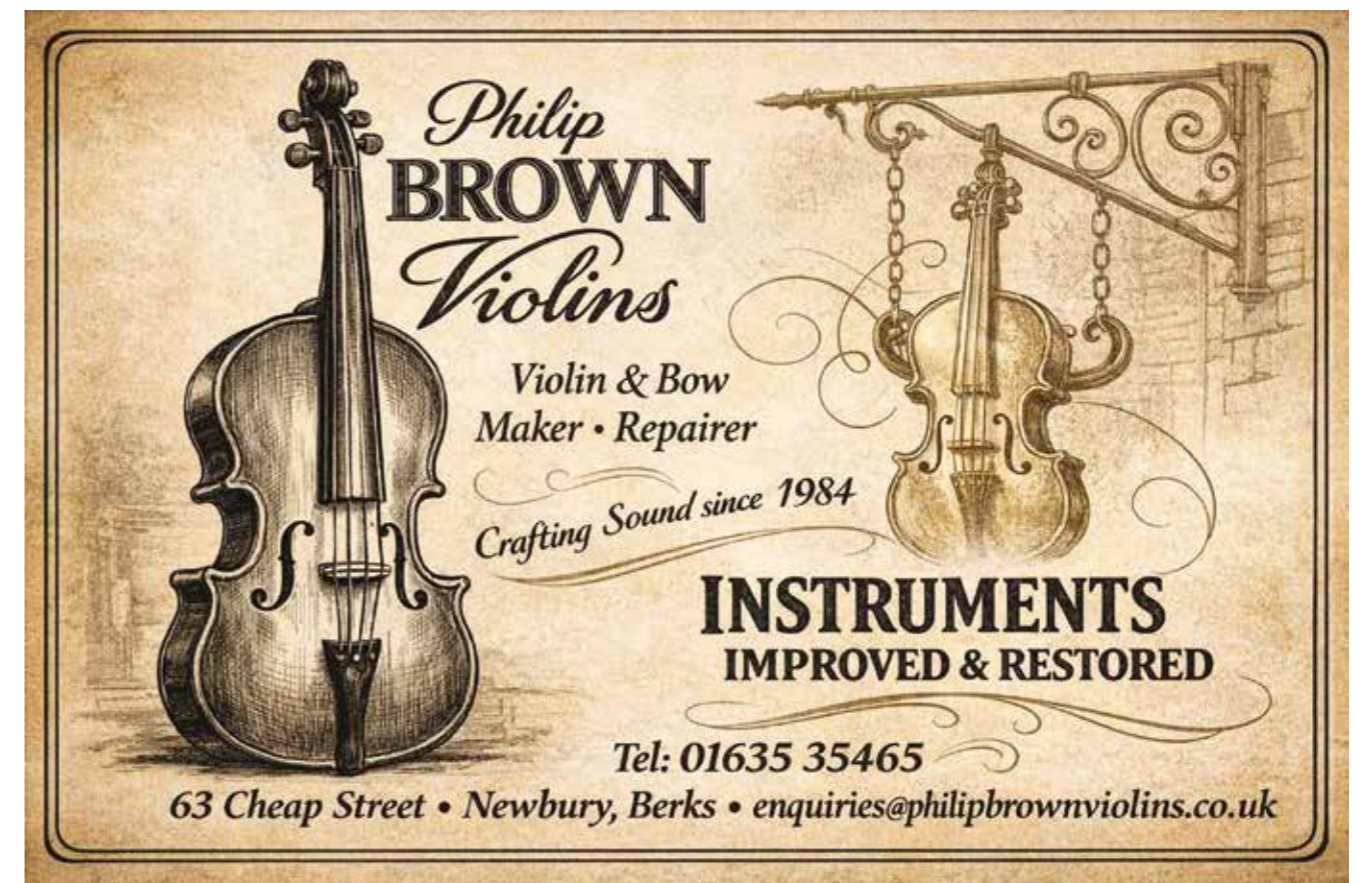
Winners at the 2024 Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) International auditions, they were also recently appointed as Grand Résident ensemble at ProQuartet in Paris for seasons 2025-2027.

Originally formed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, they were Resident Ensemble at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid with Günter Pichler and at the Dutch String Quartet Academy in Amsterdam.

The Fibonacci Quartet are prolific prize winners and have received numerous awards Updated July 2025 – including First Prize in the Royal Over-Seas League Chamber Music Competition, First Prize in the Cavatina Chamber Music Competition, The RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award, First Prize in the International Triomphe de l'Art Competition in Belgium, The Kirckman Society Award, Audience Prize at the Schiermonnikoog Festival and Special Prizes of the Shostakovich Association in Paris and Peermusic in Hamburg.

The Quartet are becoming increasingly renowned for their own original arrangements of non-classical repertoire. Their two-year Janacek project paired both of Janacek's quartets with arrangements of sets and encores has expanded to include jazz, musical theatre, heavy metal and beyond. The Quartet regularly collaborate with contemporary composers including Kaija Saariaho, Helen Grime, Gérard Pesson, and YCAT Composer Fellow 2025/26 Fergus Hall.

The Quartet is generously supported by the Hattori Foundation, the Cosman Keller Trust, The Frost Trust and Fondation Biermans-Lapôtre in Paris.



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What's New

Ian Shaw • Iain Ballamy • Jamie Safir

Jamie Safir piano • Ian Shaw vocals • Iain Ballamy tenor sax



© Lisa Wormsley

What's New, the album (Silent Wish records), was a timely coming together of three players whose collective interest in 'the moment' – i.e. musical improvisation, in cahoots with a true love of classic song forms – makes the live experience of the album an ever-growing, yet representative, gig.

The material is about human connections – friendships, relationships, positive and otherwise – and plunders eighty years of the popular song form. These are fresh arrangements of songs of love and hope – from the title song of their recording to Bernstein's *Some Other Time* as well as the Bacharach/David classics *Alfie* and *You'll Never Get To Heaven* alongside works by Legrand, Jobim and Ellington.

Primarily saxophonist, Iain Ballamy's idea (via the songs that his late father loved), the exciting young pianist, Jamie Safir (a recent contributor to the highly praised *Alone Together*, the Decca release of some of the most innovative young pianists around) was the natural choice. He both provides the harmony and drive of this bass and drumless chamber sound but also joins in the dazzling flights of sheer improvisation that fires up this hugely popular show.

Ian Shaw needs no introduction as one of the most important jazz singers and song interpreters of our times. His onstage and recording history with Iain Ballamy is well-documented. They both appeared on *In A New York Minute* with the legendary Cedar Walton in the piano chair. And Ballamy, alongside his own projects (Food, Hungry Ants), has appeared on five Shaw studio sets.

Jamie Safir

Originally from Manchester, Jamie has been based in London since 2010 when he embarked on a Bachelors Degree in Jazz Music at The Guildhall School of Music & Drama where he is now a member of the faculty. Since graduating in 2014 he has performed in some of the worlds finest venues, concert halls and jazz clubs including *The Queen Elizabeth Hall*, *The Barbican*, *Hyde Park Radio 2 Festival*, *Ronnie Scott's with the RS All Stars*, *Minton's in Harlem*, *Glastonbury Festival*.

He has toured across the UK as a member of Will Young's Band since 2015 and around Europe with Judi Jackson in 2018. Performance highlights include headlining a private show with Kylie Minogue in 2022, headlining Womad with the Brand New Heavies and a Veevo Live Session in Berlin with Olly Murs.

In 2020, Jamie recorded the album *What's New* with award-winning stars of the European jazz scene, Ian Shaw and Iain Ballamy, which released on Silent Wish Records.

He is a long-term collaborator with 2022 Parliamentary Jazz Nominee, Emma Smith and co-arranged and performed on her recent album *Meshugga Baby*.

Live Radio Credits include Steps Reunion Performance live on Radio 2 in 2017 and Radio 3's *InTune* with Ian Shaw in 2014; TV Credits include The National Lottery & Radio 2 Hyde Park Festival with Will Young in 2015 and ITV's *Christmas Carols* with Natalie Williams in 2016.

His debut solo show *Piano Talk* was premiered at the Crazy Coqs and at Ronnie Scott's in 2022 to sold-out audiences. It was co-written and directed by Radio 2 Jazz Singer of the year, Ian Shaw.

Ian Shaw

In a career spanning three decades, Ian Shaw is widely regarded as the best male jazz vocalist the UK has produced with nineteen albums to his own name. He is also a talented pianist, song writer, presenter, record producer and actor. Alongside performances at the major London venues, Shaw frequently tours throughout the UK at theatres, arts centres and jazz festivals. He has performed at numerous venues in the US; three of his recordings are on US labels. Ian is a frequent visitor to Canada with a strong connection with the Toronto-based Jazz.FM91 and has toured Australia and the Far East several times. He regularly plays festivals and club dates on the Continent of Europe.

Ian's recordings and live performances as a jazz singer have been recognised by two BBC jazz awards (2004 and 2007), a Parliamentary award (2018) and numerous award nominations including *Downbeat Magazine* (2017) and *Jazz FM* (2013 and 2019).

Alongside solo shows and performances with his regular piano trio, Shaw is also much in demand as the featured soloist with big bands and orchestras both in the UK and internationally. His many collaborators over the years include Quincy Jones, Abdullah Ibrahim, Madeline Bell, Guy Barker, Kenny Wheeler, Cleo Laine, John Dankworth and Joe Beck. In a part written especially for him, Ian performed alongside Kurt Elling and Dee Dee Bridgewater at New York's Lincoln Center and at London's Southbank, in the premiere concerts of Elling's radio-drama *The Big Blind*.

For over ten years Ian has presented the weekly Ronnie Scott's Radio Show on Jazz FM which is syndicated worldwide and has recently added podcasting to his repertoire, with *Not Even Music* now in its third series.

His self-penned release *Greek Street Friday* (2023) (*'smart and soulful'* *The Guardian*) was followed in 2024 with an album of Strayhorn classics, alongside saxophonist, Tony Kofi, *An Adventurous Dream*.

Iain Ballamy

Iain Ballamy is a key figure in contemporary European jazz with a distinctive musical voice merging avant-garde experimentation with accessible melodic sensibility. Listed in the BBC's '100 Jazz Greats' between Count Basie and Chet Baker, Ballamy has been described as urbane, original, and uncompromising. His work merges both strong jazz and classical references but remains un-encumbered by formality and tradition.

Significant partnerships include innovative big band Loose Tubes, Bill Bruford's Earthworks, Django Bates's *Human Chain* and Anglo / Norwegian duo Food. Notable recordings as leader include debut album *Balloon Man*, the revered *All Men Amen* and the fusion-oriented *Acme*.

Further acclaimed releases for ECM include *Quiet inlet* by Food with Thomas Strønen, and *Quercus* with folk singer June Tabor and pianist Huw Warren which masterfully blends folk and chamber music with improvisation.

Saxophone concerto premieres with major orchestras include BBC Philharmonic, Liverpool Philharmonic and London Sinfonietta.

Film writing credits include scores for Dave McKean's *Mirrormask* and *Luna*.

As saxophone professor at the Royal Academy of Music, RWCMD and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Ballamy has developed innovative approaches to teaching improvisation and composition.

Ballamy's musical essence combines improvisational spontaneity with a profound appreciation for harmony and form, creating performances that unfold with narrative purpose and emotional depth.

Fidelio Trio

A Thousand Mornings

Darragh Morgan violin • Tim Gill cello • Mary Dullea piano

Sponsored by Dr Stephen Golding



Beethoven Piano Trio in B flat major, *Archduke*, Op. 97

INTERVAL

Anna Clyne *A Thousand Mornings* (Fidelio Trio commission)

Ravel Piano Trio in A minor

'The virtuosic *Fidelio Trio*' (Sunday Times) lead an acclaimed and diverse international performing and recording career. In this programme they bring together two of the most loved piano trios with a new work they commissioned by Anna Clyne, in music for piano trio that spans over 200 years yet exhibits the thrilling capacity of this chamber unit of piano and strings to sound like an orchestral!

Beethoven dedicated his longest piano trio, the *Archduke*, to his friend, pupil and patron, Archduke Rudolph of Austria. Considered to be his finest trio in four movements, the opening *Allegro moderato* relishes in conversational development. The Scherzo is characterised by a rather bouncy yet taut first theme. The Andante is a set of variations which shares some of the hymnlike textures and characteristic themes we hear in later Beethoven works. And the final Rondo bursts in on the calm with a Hungarian-flavoured theme, continuing to build to an eventual 'presto' coda. This is a large-scale trio of both sweeping grandeur and intimacy.

Anna Clyne's *A Thousand Mornings* was commissioned by Fidelio Trio in 2020. Anna was inspired by a Mary Oliver poem of the same title, where the predictability and, importantly, the beauty of nature reminds us that that we will always get through dark and difficult times. The work reflects the stream of consciousness nature of the poem too in that it twists and turns between different musical realms but with a core in the chamber music unit that is the trio. This is communicated in the soaring string lines, the extremes of dynamic and tessitura as well as the structural shapes of the various sections of the piece which embrace the barely audible beginnings of a motif to passionate climaxes.

Ravel's only Piano Trio of 1914 is a spectacular virtuosic work, yet full of colour, texture, melody and mastery of orchestration for the ensemble. Ravel's music at various points alludes to Basque dance rhythms, jazz harmonies, Malay verse form (the second movement is titled 'Pantoum') and at every moment extends the capacities of all three instruments with string melodies at wide octave spacings, using the entire range of the keyboard and creating the most vivid sonorities. The work ends with a triumphant and confident coda, bringing the journey of this concert to a close.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Piano Trio in B flat major Op. 97 *Archduke*
1 *Allegro moderato*
2 *Scherzo: Allegro*
3 *Andante cantabile ma però con moto*
4 *Allegro moderato – Presto*

Beethoven's relationship with the young Archduke Rudolf began in 1803, when he was appointed music teacher to the fifteen-year-old son of Leopold II, penultimate Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia. This says much for the artistic interest and judgment of one of the most powerful men in Europe, and much for the young Archduke's promise as a pianist – as does the piano part of Beethoven's Triple Concerto, written for him a year or two later. In 1809 the Archduke, still barely in his twenties, led the princely group who jointly guaranteed Beethoven an annuity – with no conditions attached except residence in Austria and approval for foreign tours. The annuity agreement splendidly declared that 'only one who is as free from care as possible can devote himself to a single department of activity and create works of magnitude which are exalted and which ennoble art.' In spite of this material help, there would be little chance that the composer, with his explosive personality and incurably worsening deafness, would ever be free from care. Meanwhile, the Archduke had become accustomed to Beethoven's republican impatience over etiquette, giving instructions – after Beethoven objected to courtiers' lectures on the rules of conduct – that he was to be allowed to go his own way. The lifelong friendship between the two men was crowned with Beethoven's great *Missa Solemnis*, destined for the Archduke's installation as Bishop of Olmütz in 1820, but only completed some two years after the event.

Written in 1811, the Archduke Trio shares the expansive architecture of Beethoven's middle period quartets, whilst pointing at the same time towards the late works in which he was to push the boundaries of musical imagination into unpredictable realms that baffled most of his contemporaries and remain challenging. The work begins with a majestically spreading opening melody leading, after a mysterious syncopated transition, to a more playful second theme in the unexpectedly distant key of G major. The development section puts the individual phrases of the opening theme under a microscope, accompanied by a constant undercurrent of triplets, before dissolving into mysterious trills and pizzicato, out of which the main theme finally emerges softly for the recapitulation; a soaring forte version being reserved for the short coda.

With a pithy, rhythmic finale in store, Beethoven places the Scherzo second, so as to achieve maximum contrast between the movements. The Scherzo theme, drily given out in spare staccato textures, can be traced back to a hitherto undeveloped idea in the first movement. Here it proves fertile and adaptable, giving rise to a smooth, arch-shaped variant and a syncopated cadence-phrase. The Trio features a serpentine chromatic theme, more mock-sinister than seriously threatening, which alternates with brief, bold snatches of German Dance.

The theme and variations of the third movement are the heart of the work. The disarming simplicity of the melody is set off by a rich texture and by the haunting harmonic progression at the peak of its first, repeated section. Each variation uses increasingly short notes, in the manner known as 'divisions', but rather than creating a sense of speed, the effect is to make the music seem even more spacious. Finally, the melody promises to return in its opening manner, but an unexpected shift to the minor key initiates a long, meditative coda leading without break into the Finale.

Only in his later works could Beethoven end a work with a movement such as this Finale, combining the heights of creative craftsmanship with a sense of grass-roots rumbustiousness. The instruments kick the little tunes around with infectious jollity, delighting in quirky figures such as the skirling ornaments which the piano adds to the theme, or the knife-edge chromatic chases between violin and cello. Finally, the theme quickens to Presto, under a glittering piano trill. Amidst echoes of earlier themes, the music runs helter-skelter towards its exuberant finish.

Anna Clyne (1980–)
A Thousand Mornings

This is the second of Anna Clyne's works to feature in this year's Festival, following the premiere of *Sirens* by Ben Goldsneider and the London Mozart Players on 9 May. *A Thousand Mornings* was commissioned by the Fidelio Trio, who gave the first performance in November 2021.

Anna Clyne writes: "Composed in the height of the COVID-19 Lockdown in 2020, *A Thousand Mornings* draws inspiration from a poem by Mary Oliver of the same title. The short but evocative poem is written as a stream of consciousness, a process that is mirrored in the music, which moves in twists and turns between different musical realms. In her poem, Oliver reminds us of the beauty and predictability of nature and that we will always get through difficult and dark times."

A Thousand Mornings

All night my heart makes its way however it can over the rough ground of uncertainties, but only until night meets and then is overwhelmed by morning, the light deepening, the wind easing and just waiting, as I too wait (and when have I ever been disappointed?) for redbird to sing

In her fascinating series of short online videos, Clyne talks about many aspects of her music that are reflected in *A Thousand Mornings*. She speaks of looking for 'fiery' and 'off-kilter' effects, and finding the 'the initial idea that can unlock' an entire work. She describes her interest in the 'extremities of sound', which has led not only to her electronically enhanced Augmented Orchestra, but to electronically-inspired ways of using conventional instruments to explore new sounds. Visual art, folk music and poetry all provide her with sources of inspiration, with short poems creating 'magical worlds' that can spread out into longer musical shapes.

A Thousand Mornings paints a suspenseful collage of diverse elements, starting with isolated, percussive pizzicato, resonant piano clusters and slow-moving string glissandi. Gradually, new imagery is introduced – brief snatches of melody, thunderous or strident interruptions in the extreme registers of the piano, vigorous arpeggio figures on the strings. From time to time the instruments focus on a single pitch before moving off in new directions, one of the least expected being a lush outpouring of romantic melody over surging arpeggios. Towards the end, an artless little tune tries to establish its rhythm among repeated interruptions, and the music rises to a spectacular instrumental climax, before the brittle gestures from the opening return and a shadowy fragment of melody makes a final appearance.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Trio in A minor
1 *Modéré*
2 *Pantoum. Assez vif*
3 *Passacaille. Très large*
4 *Finale. Animé*

Ravel's parentage already suggests some of the strands of his complex character: from his engineer father, a native of the French/Swiss borderland, we might trace his meticulous precision and love of mechanical toys and instruments; from his Basque mother his fascination with dance and his penchant for the colourful and exotic. Steering a highly individual course through the controversies of the *belle époque*, World War 1 and cosmopolitan Paris in the 1920s, he remained a very private person; he

declined the award of the *Légion d'honneur*, and always spoke of his music with an ironic and self-deprecating detachment.

During a composing career spanning thirty years, Ravel wrote fewer than a dozen pieces of chamber music. He pondered a piano trio for some six years, before observing to a pupil that '*My Trio is finished. I only need the themes for it.*' Finding the themes and creating the finished piece proved hard work, starting late in 1913 and continuing through 1914 as war loomed ever nearer. When hostilities began he hurried to sign up, but was rejected because he was short and two kilograms underweight. Living in the Basque commune of St-Jean-de-Luz, he worked furiously to finish the piece – '*I have never worked so hard, with such insane, heroic rage*' – whilst exploring every route into the war effort; eventually he found a role as a truck and ambulance driver. The third movement perhaps reflects the grim historical situation, and the '*insane, heroic rage*' left its mark on the finale, but the first two movements reflect Ravel's characteristically dispassionate style – deriving its flavour from an ancient-and-modern blend of modal melody and spicy harmony, and its excitement from virtuoso instrumental techniques and textures.

The theme Ravel found for the opening movement is cast in the swaying 3+2+3 rhythm of a Basque folk dance, and opens with a contour that in one form or another will provide material for the rest of the Trio. Lines and colours are lucidly drawn, with the violin and cello often two octaves apart, and the piano and strings typically occupying different levels in the texture. In the middle of the movement the opening bar falls to the bass as a persistent motif, leading to a climactic return of the whole theme, and a long, gradual descent to the reflective ending.

Pantoum is a Malay verse form cultivated by several French poets in the late nineteenth century, as part of the vogue for exotic cultures. It involves the selective repetition of lines during a poem, interpreted by Ravel as the alternation of two contrasting figures – the dry, spiky opening and the smooth, surging idea that follows shortly after. The exotic is combined with tradition, as this movement takes the place of a traditional Minuet or Scherzo, and accordingly has a contrasting middle section. Here Ravel continues his alternation of the two ideas, but makes them run in polyrhythm, bouncing along, three-beats-in-a-bar, above a broad chorale moving in a slow four.

The theme of the *Passacaille* is not the bare bass line that we associate with this form in the Baroque period, but a sinuous eight-bar melody of typically modal colouring, which is not only repeated but considerably varied as the movement builds to a powerful climax and then subsides to its starting point.

The Finale looks back to the opening of the Trio through its asymmetric five-beat and seven-beat bars, and an opening idea that turns the first movement's theme upside down. But analytical details are subordinate to the brilliance of the instrumental writing, from the cross-string arpeggios and harmonics of the glittering opening to the piano's black-note glissando and cascading figuration, and the massive climax of piano chords and trilling strings.

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Fidelio Trio

The Fidelio Trio are Darragh Morgan, violin, Tim Gill, cello and Mary Dullea, piano. Shortlisted for the 2016 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards, The Fidelio Trio broadcast regularly on BBC Radio 3, RTÉ Lyric FM, WQXR, and have been featured on a Sky Arts documentary.

Since their debut at London's Southbank Centre, they have regularly appeared at the Wigmore Hall and Kings Place, at festivals including Spitalfields, Cheltenham, St. Magnus and Huddersfield. In Ireland they regularly perform at National Concert Hall, Dublin, and internationally at Shanghai Oriental Arts Centre, Beijing Modern Music Festival, Hong Kong Chamber Music Society, Singapore, Bangkok, Porto, Paris, Venice, Florence, Johannesburg, Harare, New York City, San Francisco and Boston. Recent appearances include Dark Music Days Iceland, an extensive USA tour including National Sawdust Brooklyn and 'Music on the Edge' Pittsburgh, Cayman International Arts Festival and Little Missenden Festival.

Their extensive discography includes a Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice and Critics' Choice 2022 of Chamber Music by E J Moeran, a composer with whom they are closely associated and the release of premiere recordings on Mode Records of music by Gerald Barry. Other significant releases include two French albums of Ravel and Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Chausson and Satie on Resonus Classics; Philip Glass *Head On & Pendulum* on Orange Mountain; Korngold and Schoenberg (*Verklärte Nacht* arr. Steuermann) for Naxos; the complete Michael Nyman Piano Trios for MN Records; multiple releases on NMC, Delphian Records; portrait CDs of composers such as Xiaogang Ye, Piers Hellawell and Michael Zev Gordon. Their previous release of French Piano Trios for Resonus was also a Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice. Forthcoming is an album release of recent Fidelio Trio commissions by Richard Causton, Anna Clyne and David Fennessy.

The Fidelio Trio have given masterclasses at Peabody Conservatory, Curtis Institute, NYU, Central Conservatory Beijing, and Stellenbosch

Conservatorium South Africa. They have been artists-in-residence at University of Iowa, St. Patrick's College Dublin City University, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, the State University of New York, SUNY and Tufts University, Boston.

Composers that the Trio have premiered music by include Anna Clyne, Toshio Hosokawa, Charles Wuorinen, Johannes Maria Staud, Michael Nyman, Gerald Barry, Donnacha Dennehy, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Joe Cutler, Ann Cleare, Judith Weir, Piers Hellawell, David Fennessy, Kevin Volans. Gavin Higgins, Linda Buckley, Tom Coult, Sam Perkin, Shirley Thompson, Richard Baker, Robert Saxton, Simon Bainbridge and Alexander Goehr.

Artists the Fidelio Trio have performed with include Nicholas Daniel (oboe), Michael Collins and Julian Bliss (clarinet), Richard Watkins (horn), Rachel Roberts (viola), author Alexander McCall Smith, T.S. Eliot prizewinning poet Sinéad Morrissey and actor Adrian Dunbar. They have developed work in collaboration with Rambert Dance Company and feature in the film of Sir Kenneth MacMillan's *Sea of Troubles* with Yorke Dance Project.

They often perform Beethoven's Triple Concerto including recently with KZN Philharmonic Orchestra South Africa and National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and are Artistic Directors of their annual Winter Chamber Music Festival at Belvedere House, Dublin City University.

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AUCTIONS & VALUATIONS

Britten's Spring Awakening

Tony Scotland writer and broadcaster

Sponsored by Martelize



Fifty years after the composer's death, writer and broadcaster Tony Scotland traces Benjamin Britten's stormy journey to self-discovery through three defining – and technically illegal – relationships in the late 1930s: with the composer Lennox Berkeley, ten years his senior; the German poet Wulff Scherchen, still a teenager; and the tenor Peter Pears, who was to become his lifelong partner.

Tony Scotland

Tony Scotland was an announcer on Radio Three for 20 years, then a founder presenter on Classic FM. He has written on music and travel for *The Spectator*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Harpers & Queen*, and the *BBC Music Magazine*, and published 11 books, including *Wulff: Britten's Young Apollo*, *Lennox & Freda* (about the composer Lennox Berkeley who shared a converted windmill with Britten before marrying his secretary at the BBC), and *Tommasino: The Enigma of the English Mozart* (Thomas Linley the Younger, who died aged 22). His latest book, *Shadows*, is an account of a month behind the Iron Curtain as Communism was collapsing. Tony Scotland and Julian Berkeley have lived near Newbury for fifty years.



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MZ Duo Re-Imaginations

David Zucchi saxophone • Iñigo Mikeleiz-Berrade accordion

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Granados	From <i>12 Spanish Dances</i> I. Galante – Minueto II. Oriental III. Andaluza
Grieg	Holberg Suite, Op. 40 I. Praeludium II. Sarabande III. Gavotte IV. Air V. Rigadoun
Satie	Gnossienne No. 1
INTERVAL	
Aileen Sweeney (b. 1994)	<i>The Mirrie Dancers</i>
J. S. Bach	Flute Sonata in E Minor, BWV 1034 I. Adagio ma non tanto II. Allegro III. Andante IV. Allegro
Ravel	<i>Pavane pour une infante défunte</i>
Piazzolla	Histoire du Tango III. Nightclub 1960

The MZ Duo presents a programme of creative re-imaginings of the classical repertoire, reaching as far back as JS Bach's whirlwind Flute Sonata in E Minor and Edvard Grieg's landmark Holberg Suite, to a Dixieland interpretation of Eric Satie's iconic Gnossienne No. 1, and finishing with a much-loved exploration of Astor Piazzolla's Nuevo tango. It also includes stopovers in Spain and Scotland via various reimagining of folklore and popular song, and features a work written especially for the duo by award-winning composer Aileen Sweeney.

MZ Duo is a London-based ensemble formed by Canadian saxophonist David Zucchi and Spanish accordionist Iñigo Mikeleiz-Berrade. Winners of the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition's Mixed Ensemble Prize and City Music Foundation Artists, the Duo's repertoire spans everything from reimagined traditional works to modern repertoire and improvisation, all vividly rendered by the unique combination of saxophone and accordion.

After their debut concert at the Vale de Cambra Classical Music Festival (Portugal) in 2019, the Duo has performed across the UK and Europe, including appearances at Wigmore Hall, Edinburgh Fringe, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Barnes Music Festival, Newbury Spring Festival, Music@Malling, Rye Arts Festival, Buxton International Festival, the Rosengart Museum (Lucerne), St. George's Bristol, and the Daylight Music series (Union Chapel, London). They have appeared on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* with Sean Rafferty, and have been residents at Music at Brel and Ferrandou Musique. The duo is dedicated to the generation of new repertoire for their instrumentation, and have collaborated with composers including Robin Haigh, Aileen Sweeney, Roxanna Albyati, Brian Elias, Benjamin Oliver, Michael Hughes, and Alex Paxton. New commissions and projects for the duo have been supported by the Marchus Trust, City Music Foundation, the RPS Susan Bradshaw Composers' Fund, the Nicholas Boas Charitable Trust and the Vaughan Williams Foundation.

Their debut album, *ContraDANCE*, was released by Delphian Records in February 2026.

Enrique Granados (1867–1916)

From *12 Spanish Dances*

- 1 Galante – Minueto
- 2 Oriental
- 3 Andaluza

Enrique Granados has been described as 'the Spanish Grieg' – a composer of the late nineteenth century whose work fuses national characteristics with the traditions of European romanticism. He was born and spent most of his life in Barcelona, but was not Catalan by ancestry – his father, a Spanish army captain, had been born in Cuba and his mother was from Santander. He said he considered himself '*as much a Catalan as anyone*', but this did not limit his musical sympathies. '*In my music I want to express what I feel – be it Andalusian or Chinese.*'

Granados studied the piano with Joan Pujol, as a fellow-pupil and friend of Ricardo Viñes, the great interpreter of Ravel and Debussy. He worked with Felipe Pedrell, the leading researcher into Spanish folk music, and spent two years as an 'auditeur' (an observer, rather than an enrolled student) at the Paris Conservatoire, sponsored by a wealthy Catalan who had spotted him working as a Barcelona café pianist. Largely self-taught as a composer, Granados made his debut at the age of 23 at Barcelona's Teatro Lirico in 1890, in a programme that included some of the *12 Spanish Dances*.

These pieces are full of the colour and character of Spanish folk traditions, presented in the three-part ternary form found in so many short romantic works. The *Galante-Minueto* opens with proud, vigorous gestures, that shade into thoughtful moments and give way to a melancholy tune in the minor key. In the *Oriental* a sinuous melody, doubled in thirds, floats high over a hypnotic accompaniment; the central section reflects Spain's Moorish past in its sustained, emotive melody, adorned with exotic turns of phrase and ornamentation. *Andaluza* conjures up the vibrant world of Andalusian flamenco, with a guitar-style accompaniment and a soulful, sighing melody, which takes on an anthemic quality in the major-key harmonies of the middle section.

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)

Holberg Suite, op. 40

- 1 Praeludium
- 2 Sarabande
- 3 Gavotte
- 4 Air
- 5 Rigaudon

The polymath Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754) – writer, historian, philosopher and playwright – was born in Bergen during the period when Norway was ruled from Copenhagen, and is renowned as the father of both modern Norwegian and Danish literature. By the bicentenary of Holberg's birth, another son of Bergen – Edvard Grieg – was making his name as the creator of a new national music. Grieg had studied in Germany and shot to fame at the age of 25 with his piano concerto; subsequently he avoided established 'concert' genres, instead distilling the essence of his Norwegian heritage in incidental music (notably *Peer Gynt*), piano miniatures and songs. With his strong interest in literature and drama, Grieg was the natural choice to compose music for the Holberg celebrations, including a male-voice cantata performed during the unveiling of a statue in the marketplace, and this neo-baroque suite *From Holberg's Time*.

Originally written for keyboard, the Suite was arranged by Grieg for string orchestra, and soon achieved considerable popularity, not least in England, where it was successfully performed at the 1888 Birmingham Festival. The deliberately old-fashioned style (Grieg called it '*perruque music*') is based on that of Bach, whose dates almost exactly coincide with those of Holberg. The toccata – style *moto perpetuo* of the Praeludium is followed by a contrapuntal Sarabande. Grieg's nationalism surfaces in the Gavotte, particularly in the folk-like turns of phrase of the Musette. The Air is marked *Andante religioso*; with its rich melody divided between upper and lower registers, it is the most intense of the movements, and the least deliberately archaic. The light two-part writing of the Rigaudon brings the work to a suitably spirited close.

Erik Satie (1866–1925)

Gnossienne No. 1

Eric Satie is now known mainly for the short, delicate piano pieces he wrote in the 1880s, the witty, self-deprecating comments and annotations on his own music, and his scandalous 1917 ballet *Parade*, written for Diaghilev's Russian ballet company. Surrounding these works is an extraordinary story of ups and downs, from a middle-class upbringing through the Bohemian world of Montmartre in the 1880s to a period as a cafe pianist, renewed study of

musical techniques, and finally – thanks to the avant-garde poet and artist Jean Cocteau – celebrity as a pioneer, simultaneously naive and sophisticated, surrounded by the young, excitable French musicians of the 1920s.

Gnossienne No. 1 was written in 1890, and published in *Le Figaro* musical three years later. The score is written without time signature or bar lines, and sprinkled with cryptic instructions – one of the many returns of the theme is to be played *du bout de la pensée* ('on the edge of an idea'). The title has been interpreted in various ways: the word *gnossienne* appears in the 1865 *Larousse Dictionary*, as an ancient Greek term for a ritual labyrinth dance created by Theseus to celebrate his victory over the Minotaur; it may also refer to the late nineteenth-century revival of interest in the esoteric mysticism of gnostic religion. And these are only two the possibilities that can be conjured up by the steady pace of the music, the evocative, exotic modality and ornamentation of its melody, and its mesmerising repetitions.

Aileen Sweeney (1994–)

The Mirrie Dancers

Aileen Sweeney is a composer, arranger, accordionist, podcaster and environmental activist, featured in *BBC Music Magazine's 'Rising Star'* column, and one of the most exciting voices in contemporary British music. Her interests range through cosmology, nature and folklore, combining a feeling for immense stretches of time and space with the immediacy of the here and now, and expressed in a personal style full of captivating figures and colours. Commissions have included the orchestral *Views from the M9* and *Above the Stars* (the latter referencing both Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* and the flag of the European Union). *Starburst*, written for the Colin Currie Percussion Quartet, evokes both an astronomical event and a favourite children's sweet, whilst *The Wooden Web* was inspired by the latest research into underground fungal networks. *The Mirrie Dancers* is an original work for the innovative combination of soprano saxophone and accordion, commissioned by the MZ Duo.

Aileen Sweeney writes: '*The Mirrie Dancers is a poetic name for The Northern Lights from Shetland which dates back hundreds of years. The word 'mirr' is specific to the former Norn speaking areas and means 'to shimmer,' describing the phenomenon beautifully. This piece is inspired by folk styles from both Scotland and Norway, in particular, The Halling (hallingdansen) is a folk dance traditionally performed in rural Norway, where the accompanying music is made from short*

melodic fragments which are repeated and varied, to give a feeling of improvisation and creating a hypnotic-like sound-world.'

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Flute Sonata in E Minor, BWV 1034

- 1 Adagio ma non tanto
- 2 Allegro
- 3 Andante
- 4 Allegro

J S Bach was indifferent to fashion, and must have seen a lot of what was going on around him as 'dumbing down', as baroque techniques gave way to less strenuous styles. But he was very much alive to the creative developments of his day, whether in the area of instrumental design or compositional techniques. The evolution of the baroque flute was one such development; during his working life the 'transverse' flute, popular in the France of Louis XIV for its greater range and expressiveness, largely superseded the recorder across Europe as a favourite solo woodwind instrument. Bach demonstrated the technical and expressive capabilities of the instrument in a number of solo flute sonatas – very likely during his time as kapellmeister to the young, music-loving Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen (though scholars debate the dates and authenticity of several works).

At the same time as French instrument makers were perfecting the flute, Italian musicians were leading the way in instrumental composition, in the bold, vigorous concertos and sonatas of Corelli, Vivaldi and others, some of which Bach transcribed and arranged for his own use. In this E minor sonata he reflects both tradition and innovation, filling established forms with a stream of lively musical material. Below the solo part, a single written-out 'continuo' bass line provides a foundation and counterpoint to the solo instrument. A keyboard player or other chordal instrumentalist would be expected to fill this out with improvised harmonies, making the music easily transferable to different ensembles – including instruments unheard of in Bach's day. The four movements are laid out as a traditional '*sonata a chiesa*' (church sonata), starting with a slow, serious movement.

The expressive, looping figures of the opening Adagio are full of the sighing shape of the falling third – a figure that Bach often used to create emotion in his cantatas and passions. The second movement opens with a sprightly theme, soon imitated in the bass and giving way to virtuososo passage-work that takes little account of the player's need to breathe. In the following Andante, the continuo lays down a bass pattern, repeated several times and then breaking into shorter phrases below

a rhapsodically unfolding melody. The final Allegro is all crisp clarity, with two contrasting themes (each thrown between treble and bass lines), clear-cut cadences and an overall 'binary' form of two repeated sections.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel was both a meticulous craftsman and a lover of the colourful and exotic – traits perhaps inherited respectively from his Swiss father and Basque mother. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire at a time when the gulf between its hide-bound professors and adventurous students was at its deepest, and ran into a celebrated public scandal (which led to the resignation of the Conservatoire's director), when in 1905 he was eliminated for the fourth time from the competition for the prestigious Prix de Rome. By then, spectacular works such as *Schéhérazade* and *Jeux d'eau* had earned him an enthusiastic following, and this Pavane was already six years old. It was written in 1899 as a piano solo, and given its first public performance by Ricardo Viñes in 1902. Perhaps resentful of the public esteem for this comparatively juvenile work, Ravel later turned against the piece, saying in 1913 that it was '*defective in form and lacking in adventure*'.

The title was reportedly chosen after the music was composed, and it is not necessary to be too precise about the steps of the Pavane or the identity of this late Spanish princess. The music combines an aristocratic bearing, melodic grace and an atmosphere of serene melancholy. It has the cool clarity of line and texture that are so characteristic of Ravel's work, using modal melody to create a nostalgic period effect.

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)

Histoire du Tango
III. Nightclub 1960

Astor Piazzolla came from a family of Italian immigrants to Argentina. Part of his youth was spent in New York, where he heard the latest developments in jazz, before he returned to Argentina to a career first as a bandoneon player in tango bands and then as a band-leader and composer. Like many composers from the Americas, he travelled to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, who encouraged him (as she did Gershwin) not to taint his natural gifts with too much European study. In a lifetime devoted to bringing the tango from the dance halls of Argentina to the concert halls of the world, Piazzolla broadened its range, incorporating extended harmonies, counterpoint, improvisation

and striking instrumental techniques, without losing the physicality of the original style.

Histoire du Tango is a four-movement work written in 1985 and charting the development of the tango through the twentieth century, from the light-hearted flute-and-guitar tunes of the bordellos of early twentieth-century Buenos Aires, through the languorous melancholy of 1920s café music to the 'tango of today and of the future', with its jazzy syncopations and post-Stravinsky harmonies. The third movement, 'Nightclub 1960', alternates between high-spirited and romantic moods. As Piazzolla explains: 'This is a time of rapidly expanding international exchange, and the tango evolves again as Brazil and Argentina come together in Buenos Aires. The bossa nova and the new tango are moving to the same beat. Audiences rush to the night clubs to listen earnestly to the new tango. This marks a revolution and a profound alteration in some of the original tango forms.'

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Newbury Spring Festival Chorus Brahms' A German Requiem

Newbury Spring Festival Chorus

Hilary Cronin soprano • James Atkinson baritone • Tom Primrose conductor
Libby Burgess piano • Sebastian Wybrew piano

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Building on the continued strength of the Festival Chorus we're delighted to be presenting them for this special performance of Brahms' German Requiem. This so-called *London* version of the Requiem was originally created in 1869 by the composer as a four-hand piano version of the complete work, incorporating voice and orchestra parts together for keyboard performance. It was not, therefore, simply a setting of the choral work with piano reduction of the orchestral parts.

For tonight's performance under the baton of Tom Primrose our own Festival Chorus will be joined by two remarkable soloists. Hilary Cronin has been to the Festival before and is without doubt one of the leading soloists of her generation. James Atkinson is a BBC New Generation Artist (2023-2025) winner of the 2022 Royal Over-Seas League Singers prize.

Please note that there will be no interval during this performance.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Ein deutsches Requiem

- 1 Selig sind, die da Leid tragen
- 2 Denn alles Fleisch is also deer Gras
- 3 Herr, lehre doch mich
- 4 Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
- 5 Ihr habt ach nun Traurigkeit
- 6 Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt
- 7 Selig sind die Todten

To borrow a line from Shakespeare, Johannes Brahms was not in any way 'born great'. His early life certainly showed promise that he might achieve greatness, but at the age of 20 he found greatness thrust upon him. He had grown up in the insalubrious dockland areas of Hamburg, where his modestly talented but determined father, who played a variety of brass and stringed instruments, rose through his own efforts from the bars and dance halls to the theatre orchestra. Johannes' youthful brilliance as a pianist led to concert tours with the Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi – a charismatic but disreputable character – and an introduction to Liszt at Weimar.

The visit was not a success: Brahms was too tired and nervous to play in front of the celebrity pianist and his 'court' of admiring pupils, and dropped off to sleep while his host was playing.

It was on the recommendation of a sympathetic new friend – the violinist Joseph Joachim – that Brahms parted company with Reményi and introduced himself to Robert and Clara Schumann, then a 'power couple' among prominent German musicians. A few months later he was astonished to find himself trumpeted by Schumann in the pages of the leading music magazine, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, as the artist 'fated to give us the ideal expression of the times, one who would not gain his mastery by gradual stages, but rather would spring fully armed like Minerva from the head of Zeus.' Brahms responded to this hyperbole with the soberest of answers: 'The public praise you have deigned to bestow on me will have so greatly increased the world's expectations of my work that I do not know how I shall manage to do even approximate justice to it. Above all, it forces me to exercise the greatest caution in the choice of pieces for publication.'

It was an artistic caution that would hang over Brahms for decades, whilst in the short-term running alongside emotional turmoil. A year after their meeting, Schumann attempted suicide and spent the last two years of his life in an asylum; Brahms visited him regularly and supported Clara and her young family throughout that time. He undoubtedly fell in love with her (the intense beginning of a close lifelong friendship) and was surely trying to school his own feelings when he wrote to her some months after Schumann's death, 'Passions are not natural to mankind.... the ideal man is calm both in his joy and in his sorrow.' The fiercely challenging first piano concerto, which at the time he was hammering laboriously into its final shape, is anything but calm.

The immediate prompt for the Requiem came some ten years later, from the death of Brahms' mother, to whom he was devoted. Inevitably, memories of Schumann, too, must have hung over this highly personal undertaking. Brahms chose and organised the Biblical texts, which are about the living, their grief and consolation; this is in no way a German translation of the Latin Requiem Mass, with its liturgical content and prayers for the souls of the dead. When it was suggested that Brahms should introduce a more specific reference to the redeeming power of Jesus' death and resurrection, he explained that he had deliberately not chosen doctrinal verses, and that he would 'gladly have left out 'German' and substituted 'Human'.

Compared with his recent work it was a highly ambitious undertaking. He had gained valuable experience conducting and composing for the Hamburg women's choir, and the orchestra and choral society at the small Detmold court, but the Requiem brings together a mixed choir and full orchestra for the first time in his career, in the longest single work he ever wrote. Its style reflects Brahms' study of Bach, the chorales of the Lutheran church and the polyphony of Palestrina, combining these with his expressive harmonic vocabulary and strong sense of motivic coherence.

The 'London version' of the Requiem, with piano duet accompaniment, was prepared by Brahms and used for the first British performance of the work in 1871. The piano part is not merely a transcription of the orchestral accompaniment, but a self-contained duet version of the entire work, incorporating essential parts of the vocal lines, with the words printed in the score. Whilst the orchestral colouring (and with it some of the 'symphonic' character of the work) is inevitably missing, this version allows more prominence to the choral writing, with its beautifully judged variety of line and texture.

A slow 'drum beat' sets a sombre tone, as the opening music rises from the depths through a series of figures that will be recurrent thematic elements through the work – among them the chord sequence at the start; the arching motif of the first melody and the three rising notes with which Brahms colours the first word, 'Selig' ('blessed'). Each of the verses of text moves from darkness to light – from sorrow to comfort, and even to rejoicing. Upward movement characterises the music, with successive entries through the parts leading to gloriously extended phrases in the sopranos' upper register. The movement is arranged in a three-part structure, with the 'Selig' section returning at the end – as it will also do at the conclusion of the whole work.

The second movement (it was reported by a friend many years later) originated at the time of Schumann's illness, as the abandoned 'slow scherzo' of a symphony – the work that finally became the first piano concerto. An instrumental march is overlaid with distant lower voices in unison, intoning a melody in the arch shape heard already at the start of the previous movement: Brahms said it was based on a 'well-known' Lutheran chorale melody, since identified as 'Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten'. The introductory march returns, this time rising powerfully until the full choir burst onto the scene again in a remarkably visual moment. The lyricism of the middle section corresponds to the 'Trio' section in the middle of a symphonic minuet or scherzo, and the march is duly repeated. But Brahms does not let any of his movements end in gloom: a new text changes the mood with the words

'But yet...,' setting off a fugue with a striding theme more instrumental than vocal in character. The words 'grief' and 'sorrow' bring only temporary musical diversions on the way to a joyful climax and peaceful conclusion.

The text of the third movement introduces the baritone soloist, embodying the first person 'me' who now appears in the text. The soloist introduces a broad 'call and response', answered by the chorus in the homophonic style of a Bach chorale. The second solo section is intensified by an anxious rhythmic motif that is emphatically taken up by the chorus and accompaniment. In a developing narrative, the sense of angst increases as soloist and choir bewail the frailty of man, and plead for help in music reminiscent of the 'crowd' choruses of the Bach Passions: striding choral entries are interspersed with cries of 'Now, Lord'. The movement concludes with a triumphant 'pedal' fugue, in which the vocal parts – strongly instrumental in character, with leaping arpeggios and long florid lines – are underpinned by an unchanging bass note.

The first performance of the work in Vienna was limited to the first three movements. The third movement in particular, divided the audience, one critic writing that the bass solo 'is not written gratefully for the voice and there is much that is obtrusively bizarre and unedifying in the chorus'. It could not have helped that the timpanist apparently misread his dynamic instructions and pounded out the bass note fortissimo throughout the fugue.

The whole work pivots around the fourth, central movement. 'How lovely are thy dwellings, Lord' is a piece so perfect in design and complete in itself that it is often performed separately. The longing for heaven in the text is entirely free from the earth-bound realities of death and grief, and the melody soars upwards, several times gathering the force of the 'selig' motif from the opening of the work as it goes. The short texts allow Brahms to design a coherent musical structure, with a contrasting middle section, a climactic section of lively counterpoint, and a coda that brings back the opening words, now landing in a gentle descent.

The last three movements balance the first three in reverse order: the fifth movement a solo, the sixth weighty and dramatic, and the seventh a quiet conclusion that matches the subdued opening. The fifth movement was the last to be written, added after the rest of the work had its successful premiere in Bremen in 1868. It includes the most explicit link to the death of Brahms' mother, both in the choice of the text 'I will comfort, like as a mother giveth comfort', and in the introduction of a soprano soloist into the work. The solo line, floating high in the soprano register, has an unexpectedly operatic

opulence. The text is divided between soloist and chorus, with the solo soprano offering comfort, and the reference to 'mother' only appearing in the chorus part.

The sixth movement matches, and outdoes, the second movement in its drama and variety, and also brings back the baritone soloist, again associated with the first person at the words 'I will show you a mystery'. The music opens in an atmosphere of pilgrimage, with the choir moving together at a regular pace, addressed by the soloist. In his avoidance of theology, Brahms has so far kept clear of issues of sin and redemption, but he cannot entirely escape a brief, powerful evocation of the last trumpet. However, there is no fear of judgement. The movement unfolds with increasing confidence and excitement, firstly with a triple-time episode of homophonic choral writing that might almost be part of Brahms' 'Liebeslieder' (Love song) waltzes, were it not driven on by the forceful accompaniment. The last section is a huge fugue, based on a broad theme that again incorporates the three-note 'Selig' motif, (both forwards and reversed). At two climactic moments, this motif ascends thrillingly from the bass of the orchestra to the top of the soprano range.

The final movement is an epilogue that brings the overall arch shape of the work to its conclusion. Brahms marks the opening 'Feierlich', 'ceremonially'. Over an accompaniment in expressive slurred pairs of notes, the sopranos sing a phrase with a sustained line and high register, which calls to mind the soloist's part in the fifth movement. This melody not only incorporates elements from earlier in the work, but opens, like the first movement, with the word 'selig', 'blessed'. The choral basses take over the same phrase, now echoing the baritone soloist. After an episode of conversation between the vocal parts, the expansive opening melody returns, followed by the gradual reappearance of the rising 'selig' theme (first hinted in the accompaniment) and a seamless transition into a reprise of the hushed closing bars of the first movement.

EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM (A GERMAN REQUIEM) by Johannes Brahms, Opus 45

Words selected from the Lutheran Bible by the Composer

1

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen, denn sie sollen getröstet werden.

Die mit Tränen säen, werden mit Freuden ernten. Sie gehen hin und weinen und tragen edlen Samen und kommen mit Freuden und bringen ihre Garben.

2

Denn alles Fleish es ist wie Gras, und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen wie des Grases Blumen. Das Gras ist verdorret und die Blume abgefallen.

So seid nun geduldig, lieben Brüder, bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn. Siehe, ein Ackermann wartet auf die köstliche Frucht der Erde und ist geduldig darüber, bis er empfahe den Morgenregen und Abendregen.

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wiederkommen und gen Zion kommen mit Jauchzen; ewige Freude wird über ihrem Haupte sein; Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen, und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.

3

Herr, lehre doch mich, dass ein Ende mit mir haben muss und mein Leben ein Ziel hat und ich davon muss. Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Handbriet vor dir, und mien Leben ist wie nights vor dir. Ach, wie gar nights sind alle Menschen, die doch so

sicher leben. Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen und machen ihnen viel vergebliche Unruhe; sie sammeln und Wissen nicht, wer es kriegen wird. Nun, Herr, wes soll ich mich trösten? Ich hoffe auf dich.

Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, ind keine Qual rühret sie an.

4

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth! Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn; mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott.

Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen, die loben dich immerdar.

5

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit; aber ich will euch wiedersehen, und euer Herz soll sich freuen, und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.

Sehet mich an: Ich habe eine kleine Zeit Mühe und Arbeit gehabt und habe grossen Trost funden.

Ich will euch trösten, wie eien seine Mutter tröstet.

6

Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.

Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis: Wir werden nicht alle entschlafen, wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden; und dasselbige plötzlich, in einem Augenblick, zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune. Denn es wird die Posaune schallen, und die Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich, und wir werden verwandelt werden. Dann wird erfüllet werden das Wort, das geschrieben steht; Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg. Tod, wo ist dein Stachel? Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg?

Herr, du bist würdig, zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft, denn du hast alle Dinge geschaffen, und durch deinen Willen habe sie das Wesen und sind geschaffen.

7

Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben von nun an. Ja, der Geist spricht, dass sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit, denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

1

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5.4

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Who goes forth and weeps, and bears precious seed, shall come again rejoicing, and bring his sheaves with him. Psalm 126: 5-6

2

Behold, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower thereof is fallen. I Peter 1.24

Now therefore be patient, my brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. See how the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, till it receive in time the morning and evening rain. James 5.7

But yet the Lord's word stands for ever. I Peter 1.2

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return again, and come with singing unto Zion. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads always, gladness and joy everlasting shall they obtain, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 35.10

3

Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days; let me know how frail I am, that I be made sure how long I have to live. Surely, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth before thee; and my lifetime is as nothing to thee; verily every man living is altogether vanity. For man walks as a shadow, and he disquiets himself in vain; yea, all in vain; his riches, he knows not who shall gather them. Now, Lord, what then do I hope for? My hope is in Thee. Psalm 39.5-8

But the righteous souls are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. Wisdom 3.1

4

How lovely are thy dwellings fair, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longs, yea longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh ring out their joy unto the living God. Psalm 84.2-3

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they praise thee, Lord, evermore. Psalm 84.5

5

You now have sorrow; but I will again behold you, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you. John 16.22

Behold, see how for a little while labour and toil were my lot, yet I have found much comfort. Ecclesiasticus 51.27

I will comfort you as one whom his mother comforts. Isaiah 66.13

6

For we have here no abiding city, but we seek that to come. Hebrews 13.14

Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For behold, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. I Corinthians 15.51-52

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory" O death, where is thy victory? O hell, where is thy sting? I Corinthians 15.54-55

Worthy art Thou, Lord, of praise and honour and power, for Thou, almighty, hast created all things, and because of thy will they exist and were created Revelation 4.11

7

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; even so, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labours; and their works follow after them. Revelation 14.13



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Hilary Cronin

Praised by *Classical Voice North America* for her 'shining, rounded timbre', Hilary Cronin won both First Prize and Audience Prize at the 2021 London Handel International Singing Competition and was selected by BBC Music Magazine as a "Rising Star of 2022." Conductors with whom she has worked include Sofi Jeannin, David Bates, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Harry Bicket, Harry Christophers, Jonathan Cohen, Laurence Cummings, Christian Curnyn, Maxim Emelyanychev, John Eliot Gardiner, Robert King, Stephen Layton, Paul McCreech, Trevor Pinnock, Christophe Rousset, Andras Schiff, Dinis Sousa and Peter Whelan.

Highlights of her career have included Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*), Oriana (*Amadigi*), *Brookes Passion* and *Virtù / Damigella (L'Incoronazione di Poppea)* with The English Consort; the title role in *Semele* for Waterperry Opera Festival; *Piacere (Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno)* with Early Opera Company; *B Minor Mass, Christmas Oratorio* and *L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato* with English Baroque Soloists; *St John Passion* with BBC Philharmonic; J. S. Bach's *Cantatas* with London Handel Orchestra; Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with The Royal Orchestral Society; *Messiah* with Britten Sinfonia, the Hallé, Huddersfield Choral Society and The Sixteen; *Silete venti* with The King's Consort; *First Harlot / Queen of Sheba (Solomon)* with Gabrieli Consort & Players; and Mendelssohn's *Symphony No. 2* with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. She also appeared in *Command Performance: Music for an Empress* with Academy of Ancient Music.

During the 2025/26 season, Hilary makes her debut at MusikTheater an der Wien singing the title role in a new production of Cesti's *L'Orontea*. Her current engagements further include Melissa (*Amadigi*) for Buxton International Festival and both Iole (*Hercules*) and Haydn (*Nelson Mass*) with The English Concert. With Polyphony, she sings J. S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *Messiah*; with Springhead Constellation, she will tour J. S. Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*; with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, she sings J. S. Bach's *St John Passion*; with Royal Northern Sinfonia, she sings

Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* and with Gabrieli ROAR she appears in *Baroque Masterpieces*. She will also join Irish Baroque Orchestra to sing *Messiah*; The King's Consort to sing *Coronation of King George* and *Messiah*; and return to London Handel Festival to sing *Nine German Arias* with Arcangelo.

Her growing discography now includes J. S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* (DGG), Charpentier's *A Baroque Christmas* (SDG CD), Handel's *Chandos Anthems* (Alpha Classics), Howells' *Sine nomine* (Hyperion), *Dido and Aeneas* (Pentatone) and Telemann's *Donner-Ode* (cpo).

Hilary Cronin is delighted to be returning to Newbury Spring Festival.



James Atkinson

British baritone James Atkinson is a graduate of the Royal College of Music Opera Studio, where he studied with Alison Wells. He is a BBC New Generation Artist (2023-2025) in conjunction with BBC Radio 3 and winner of the 2022 Royal Over-Seas League Singers prize.

He made his professional debut singing the role of Masetto in *Don Giovanni* for Welsh National Opera, returning in 2024 for Guglielmo's *Così fan tutte*. In the 2022/23 season, he sang Orest in *Elektra* with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and Jonathan Nott, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* for Wild Arts and Steuermann in *Tristan und Isolde* for Luxembourg Opera. Last season he added to his repertoire the role of Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Mozartists and Ian Page. The 2025/26 season includes his role debut as Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) on tour in the Netherlands with the Orchestra of the 18th Century and appearances in London, Geneva, Hannover, Dublin and Abu Dhabi.

His concert experience includes *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and Jonathan Nott, Haydn's *Creation* with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and Bernard Labadie, Schubert orchestrated songs with the Luxembourg Philharmonic and Nicolas Ellis, Brahms' *Requiem* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and with the

Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, Fauré's *Requiem* with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Handel's *Messiah* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and John Butt and with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in Copenhagen, Bach's *St John Passion* with Polyphony and Stephen Layton, and his Edinburgh International Festival debut in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Ryan Wigglesworth.

A distinguished recitalist, his appearances include the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Klosters Festival, Barcelona, Birmingham, Oxford, London's Wigmore Hall and his BBC Proms debut at Belfast's Ulster Hall.



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Libby Burgess

Pianist Libby Burgess is well-known on concert stages across Britain, playing as song specialist and chamber musician in the country's major halls and festivals, and on Radio 3. Equally admired for her programming, she is founding Artistic Director of New Paths Music, curating fourteen festivals of song, chamber music and community outreach, and was Co-Artistic Director with Martin Roscoe of the Beverley Chamber Music Festival 2018-2022.

Libby's recent calendar includes song concerts at Wigmore Hall, Oxford Lieder, Leeds Lieder and Aldeburgh Festival; *The Rite of Spring* with Chris Hopkins; the complete Beethoven cello sonatas with five cellists and broadcasts with the BBC Singers. Her premiere with Marcus Farnsworth of Cheryl Frances-Hoad's *Everything Grows Extravagantly* was selected as a Times highlight of the year.

Currently undertaking a Bach marathon, Libby is performing Bach's entire *Well-Tempered Clavier* nationwide, to date raising over £32,000 for Help Musicians, Live Music Now, Future Talent and Youth Music.



Sebastian Wybrew

Sebastian Wybrew has been praised for his 'tremendous versatility and sense of colour' (*BBC Music Magazine*), giving recitals with many of the United Kingdom's most eminent performers including Dame Felicity Lott, Iestyn Davies and Christopher Maltman. Sebastian made his debut at Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam with Ian Bostridge, and at Wigmore Hall with Sophie Bevan.

He has received acclaim from *Classical Music* magazine for his recording of Geoffrey Grey's *Partita* with trumpeter Simon Cheney and was awarded the Accompanist Prize at the John Kerr English Song Competition and the Jean Meickle Duo Prize at the 2017 Wigmore Hall Song Competition with soprano Gemma Summerfield.

Sebastian has been broadcast live on BBC radio and television and his recording with Sophie Bevan, *Songs of Vain Glory*, was released by Wigmore Hall Live in 2018 to unanimous critical acclaim.

In much demand as a pedagogue, Sebastian is teaching professor at the Royal College of Music and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. He works with François Le Roux and Felicity Lott for Wigmore Hall's French Song Exchange and has given masterclasses for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Edward Said Conservatory, Palestine and the Fondation Royaumont, France.



Tom Primrose

Tom Primrose is a critically acclaimed British conductor, accompanist and coach, whose performances have won praise for their discipline, grace, and imagination. Recent conducting engagements have included *Turn of the Screw* at Royal Opera House, Linbury Theatre, Covent Garden, Antony McDonald's critically acclaimed *The Rake's Progress* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the Grange Festival, *Die Fledermaus* in Lucerne, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in Newbury, and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Cambridge.

Tom's freelance work takes him all over the world, working at theatres such as Palais Garnier and Bastille with Opéra National de Paris, The Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, Norwegian Opera in Oslo, Theater an der Wien, Polish National Opera, Korea National Opera, Opéra de Montecarlo, and the Mariinsky Hall in St Petersburg. In the UK he has freelanced in the Royal Opera House, Garsington, ENO, Grange Festival, Shadwell Opera, Opera Holland Park, and a host of others. He has assisted or chorus mastered for a host of esteemed conductors including Alexander Soddy, Susanna Mälkki, David Parry, Richard Egarr, Finnegan Downie Dear, Paul Daniel, Yan-Pascal Tortelier. In addition to the core operatic repertoire, Tom is sought after in the preparation of twentieth century and contemporary opera. Recent engagements have included Janáček's *The Makropoulos Case* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Srnka's *Voice Killer*, Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Berg's *Wozzeck*, Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are*.

He has strong connections with East Anglia where he is Artistic Co-Director of the Southrepps Music Festival, worked regularly at the University of East Anglia and with the Cambridge Philharmonic, and acted for a time as Assistant Organist and Director of the Girls' Choir at Norwich Cathedral. Tom is an award-winning piano accompanist, and has performed in many of the UK's principal concert halls and festivals, on BBC television and radio, and has collaborated with many of the UK's and Europe's leading singers and instrumentalists. He remains a sought-after vocal coach and chorus trainer, combining his wide-ranging repertoire knowledge

with a refined understanding of vocal technique and pedagogy.

In summer 2026 he moves to the Netherlands to take up a new full-time position, working in Netherlands Reisopera.

Newbury Spring Festival Chorus

Now in its twenty-seventh year, the Chorus was established in 1999 by Mark Eynon to give singers in the Newbury area the opportunity to sing with leading conductors and orchestras and enabling them to sing diverse, demanding and exciting works. Formerly under the direction of Janet Lincé and now in the care of Tom Primrose, the Chorus has earned a reputation for a high standard of performance and musicianship.

Over the years, the Chorus has celebrated a number of memorable and acclaimed performances. In 2019, the group delivered an outstanding rendition of Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*, demonstrating both musical artistry and collective excellence. Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the Chorus returned to the stage with Mozart's Coronation Mass. This performance was widely praised as '*A triumphal return of the Spring Festival; a brilliant orchestra, a world class conductor and our very own Chorus, expertly prepared by chorus master Tom Primrose*'.

More recently, the Chorus, again under the baton of Tom Primrose, took on Beethoven's musically and vocally demanding *Missa Solemnis*. Described as '*extraordinarily moving, rousing and thought-provoking...*', it further cemented the Chorus' reputation for tackling challenging works with skill and emotional depth.

This year the Chorus performs the well loved, profound and moving *Ein Deutsches Requiem* by Brahms with the support of world-class soloists and musicians.

If you are interested in joining the Chorus in future Festivals, please contact the Chorus Manager Rachel Bowey via the Newbury Spring Festival office. All good singers are welcome to apply, especially in the Tenor and Bass sections. Younger, less experienced singers (aged 18+) would also be very welcome. Rehearsals are held between March and May, on Thursday evenings in St Nicolas School, Newbury.

Immy Churchill Jazz Quartet

Immy Churchill vocals • Scottie Thompson piano • Toby Yapp bass • Jonah Evans drums

Sponsored by The Headley Trust



Young Artists Recital 6

Immy Churchill is a jazz vocalist, singer-songwriter, lyricist, and educator who graduated from The Royal Academy of Music in 2024. As a CMF 2025 Artist and finalist in the Tina May Young Jazz Musician Competition 2025, Immy is no stranger to performing and has extensive experience of touring in the UK and across Europe. Growing up in a musical family, she was surrounded by the sounds of Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Count Basie and Nat King Cole from a very young age.

Described as a "rising star," she was a finalist in the Tina May Young Jazz Musician Award and is establishing herself on the London jazz scene, performing at Pizza Express Live, The Vortex, Ronnie Scott's, Kings Place, and The Green Note. Immy has toured Germany and Switzerland, performing with Lukas DeRungs' quintet and the Jazz-Choir Freiburg in the Kosmos Suite. She has also been a member of Florian Arbenz's band, sharing the stage with acclaimed musicians including Jim Hart, Percy Pursglove, Szymon Mika, Greg Osby, Christy Doran, and Ivo Neame.

Recording highlights include Emma Rawicz's ACT-released album *Chroma*, featuring Ivo Neame, Ant Law, Asaf Sirkis, and Conor Chaplin, with a release performance at The Jazz Cafe. Immy is a true improviser, "as if creating a new, fresh and flowing vocal line is the most natural thing in the world". She often writes and performs lyrics for instrumental compositions, showcasing her skill as a lyricist. Alongside performing, she has been developing her own songwriting, curating The Downstairs Living Room Series at The Vortex Jazz Club as a platform for her original work. Her debut solo releases, *Give Me Time To Breathe* and *Fall Awake* (out summer 2025), marked a new chapter in her artistic journey and establish her as one of the most distinctive voices emerging in contemporary jazz.

The American Songbook is Immy's true musical love and she will be bringing her piano trio to celebrate the iconic jazz voices from the 50s and 60s. Expect to be transported back in time with the sounds of *I'm In The Mood For Love*, *Stardust* and *Cheek To Cheek* as well as many more.

Budapest Café Orchestra

Christian Garrick violin, dumbek • **Murray Grainger** button accordion
Kelly Cantlon double bass • **Adrian Zolotuhin** guitar, saz, balalaika, domra

Sponsored by Friends of Newbury Spring Festival



Refreshingly unconventional, snappily attired, boutique orchestra. Budapest Café Orchestra bring you gypsy and folk-flavoured music repackaged in their own fresh and surprising way. From Balkan and Russian traditional pieces to artful distillations of the masterpieces by the great Romantic composers to Gaelic folk anthems their infectious music will get into your veins and stay there forever.

The Budapest Café Orchestra was established in 2009 by British composer and violinist, Christian Garrick, and led by him have won legions of fans with their magical and infectious performances. A small but impeccably formed ensemble of just four players, the BCO combines violin, guitar, accordion, double bass, saz & balalaika to dazzling effect.

Christian Garrick and the Budapest Cafe Orchestra

Led by jazz violin superstar Christian Garrick, The Budapest Café Orchestra play traditional folk and gypsy flavoured music from across the Balkans and Russia. Klezmer, Romanian Doinas, Hungarian Czadas and beautiful ballads – such as the theme to Schindler's List and Andy Statman's beautiful Flatbush Waltz – are all featured. Evoking vivid images of Tzigane fiddle maestros, Budapest café life and gypsy campfires – plus a few surprises along the way – hugely entertaining, immense skill and profound musicianship, a show by the BCO is good enough to make you want to book that holiday down the Danube!

Like the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, the Budapest Café Orchestra have won legions of fans through their infectious and captivating performances. A small but impeccably formed orchestra of just four players, the BCO combines violin, guitar, accordion, double bass, saz & balalaika creating an awesome aural alchemy only normally only characteristic of far larger ensembles.

Christian Garrick is one of Europe's most celebrated jazz violinists and his CV boasts the likes of Dame Cleo Laine and Sir John Dankworth, Wynton Marsalis, Nigel Kennedy and Caro Emerald. Another member of the Orchestra is one of Russia's most enigmatic musical exports. The Sultan is played expertly by Adrian Zolotuhin, a master of the strummed strings of domra, balalaika, guitar and saz. Veteran bass-man Kelly Cantlon has been in the business of laying down the low notes for many moons. Kelly found fame in the late 60's as a Vagabond with northern soul sensations Jimmy James and the Vagabonds. Maestro Murray Grainger lives, breathes and sleeps all things accordion and is the country's most highly regarded authority on the subject. He is also amongst the few of the worlds' exponents of the diminutive accordina, which he will show off in all its glory during this evening's performance.

FAMILY FUN AT THE CORN EXCHANGE

TAKE FLIGHT

Wed 27 May 11am, 1pm & 3pm

A stunning aerial theatre show for little ones following the story of a baby bird.



Ages 0-2



Ages 3+

SIR CHARLIE STINKY SOCKS AND THE REALLY BIG ADVENTURE

Fri 29 May 2pm

Join this daring knight on his brave quest!

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Sun 31 May 1.30pm

Get ready for the ultimate family adventure, with a host of dino friends!



Ages 4+

PREPARE FOR PANTO MAGIC THIS CHRISTMAS



Fri 27 Nov - Sat 2 Jan

CORN EXCHANGE NEWBURY

VOCES8

Give Me Your Stars

Savannah Porter • Eleonora Poignant • Katie Jeffries-Harris • Barnaby Smith
 Blake Morgan • Euan Williamson • Chris Moore • Dominic Carver

Sponsored by Mr & Mrs Patrick Hungerford and Mr & Mrs Toby Ward



Tomás Luis de Victoria	Regina Caeli á 8
Eric Whitacre	All Seems Beautiful to Me
Lucy Walker	Give Me Your Stars
John Barry & Bill Conti arr. Jim Clements	For Your Eyes Only & You Only Live Twice
Carroll Coates arr. Gene Puerling	London By Night
Ola Gjeilo	Ubi Caritas
Taylor Scott Davis	Stardust
Edvard Grieg	Ave Maris Stella
Gustav Holst	Nunc Dimittis
INTERVAL	
Stephen Paulus	The Road Home
Franz Schubert	Liebe
The Beatles	Free as a Bird
Kate Rusby arr. Jim Clements	Underneath the Stars
trad. arr. Joshua Pacey	Danny Boy
Simon & Garfunkel arr. Naomi Crellin	Homeward Bound
Irving Berlin arr. Jim Clements	Cheek to Cheek
Vernon Duke & Yip Harburg arr. Jim Clements	April in Paris
Fred Ebb & John Kander arr. Alexander L'Estrange	New York, New York

VOCES8 make a welcome return to the Festival with a programme exploring the profound and diverse beauty of music inspired by the heavens, human connection, and the places we call home. At its heart is Lucy Walker's eponymous new work, written for VOCES8, which captures the delicate balance between celestial wonder and the deep, personal connections that make us human.

The programme spans centuries of choral music, from the luminous polyphony of Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Regina Caeli* to timeless jazz standards. Along the way, we encounter the reflective sentiments of Eric Whitacre's *All Seems Beautiful to Me* and Ola Gjeilo's *Ubi Caritas*, folk traditions in *Danny Boy* and Michael McGlynn's *Dúlaman*, and evocative tales of cities and starlight in *April in Paris* and *New York, New York*.

Give Me Your Stars explores the profound and diverse beauty of music inspired by the heavens, human connection, and the places we call home. At its heart is Lucy Walker's eponymous new work, written for VOCES8, which captures the delicate balance between celestial wonder and the deep, personal connections that make us human.

Tomás Luis de Victoria
Regina Caeli á 8

Regina caeli laetare, Alleluia.
 Quia quem meruisti portare, Alluluia.
 Resurrexit sick dixit, Alleluia.
 Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia.

Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia.
 Because you were worthy to bear him, Alleluia.
 He has risen as he foretold, Alleluia.
 Pray to God for us, Alleluia.

Eric Whitacre

All Seems Beautiful to Me

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of imaginary lines
 Going where I list, my own master total and absolute.
 Listening to others, considering well what they say,
 Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
 gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself from
 the holds that would hold me.
 I inhale great draughts of space.
 The East and the West are mine, and the North and
 the South are mine.
 I am larger, better than I thought,
 I did not know I held so much goodness.
 All seems beautiful to me,
 I can repeat over and over to men and women
 You have done such good to me, I would do the same
 to you,
 I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
 I will scatter myself among men and women as I go,
 I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them,
 Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
 Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and
 shall bless me.

(Walt Whitman)

Lucy Walker

Give Me Your Stars

Peace flows into me
As the tide to the pool by the shore;
It is mine forevermore,
It ebbs not back like the sea.

I am the pool of blue
That worships the vivid sky;
My hopes were heaven-high,
They are all fulfilled in you.

I am the pool of gold
When sunset burns and dies—
You are my deepening skies,
Give me your stars to hold.
(Sara Teasdale)

John Barry & Bill Conti arr. Jim Clements
For Your Eyes Only and You Only Live Twice

For your eyes only
Can see me through the night
For your eyes only
I never need to hide
You can see so much in me
So much in me that's new
I never felt 'til I looked at you

You only live twice
Or so it seems
One life for yourself
And one for your dreams

For your eyes only, only for you
You see what no one else can see
Now I'm breaking free
For your eyes only, only for you
The love I know you need in me
The fantasy you freed in me
Only for you, only for you

And love is a stranger
Who'll beckon you on
Don't think of the danger
Or the stranger is gone

For your eyes only, the nights are never cold
You really know me, that's all I need to know
Maybe I'm an open book
Because I know you're mine
But you won't need to read between the lines

For your eyes only, only for you
You see what no one else can see
Now I'm breaking free
For your eyes only, only for you
The passions that collide in me
The wild abandoned side of me
Only for you, for your eyes only

And love is a stranger
Who'll beckon you on
Don't think of the danger
Or the stranger is gone

This dream is for you
So pay the price
Make one dream come true
You only live twice

Carroll Coates arr. Gene Puerling
London By Night

London by night is a wonderful sight
There is magic abroad in the air
I'm often told that the streets turn into gold
When the moon shines on Circus and Square

Deep in the dark that envelops the park
There's romance in each cigarette's glow
Down by the Thames, lights that sparkle like gems
Seem to wink at each girl and her beau

Up comes the moon when the city's asleep
He's not alone, for it seems
Somewhere up there stands an angel to keep
Her watch while each Londoner dreams

My love and I saw the sun leave the sky
Then we kissed in the fast-fading light
Most people say they love London by day
But lovers love London by night

Ola Gjeilo
Ubi Caritas

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsulemus, et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur:
Ne nos mente dividamur, caveamus.
Cessent iurgia maligna, cessent lites.
Et in medio nostri sit Christus Deus.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Simul quoque cum beatis videamus,
Glorianter vultum tuum, Christe Deus:
Gaudium quod est immensum, atque probum,
Saecula per infinita saeculorum. Amen.

*Where charity and love are, there God is.
The love of Christ has gathered us into one.
Let us exult, and in Him be joyful.
Let us fear and let us love the living God.
And from a sincere heart let us love each other
(and Him).*

*Where charity and love are, there God is.
Therefore, whensoever we are gathered as one:
Lest we in mind be divided, let us beware.
Let cease malicious quarrels, let strife give way.
And in the midst of us be Christ our God.*

*Where charity and love are, there God is.
Together also with the blessed may we see,
Gloriously, Thy countenance, O Christ our God:
A joy which is immense, and also approved:
Through infinite ages of ages. Amen.*

Taylor Scott Davis
Stardust

A love like ours,
Sincere and pure.
Deserves to be guided by angels,
Deep, into the unknown.
On a bed of eternity,
Lay down its ivory bones.
Until destiny and time collide
And make of them – stardust.
(Clairel Estevez)

Edvard Grieg
Ave Maris Stella
Ave maris stella. Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper virgo, felix coeli porta.

Solve vincla reis, profer lumen caecis:
Mala nostra pelle bona cuncta posce.

Vitam praesta puram, iter para tutum:
Ut videntes Iesum semper collaetemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto, tribus honor unus. Amen.

*Hail star of the sea. God's cherishing mother
And, though still a virgin, the blessed entrance-way
of heaven.*

*Bound by Satan's fetters, health and vision needing.
God will aid and light us at thy gentle pleading.*

*So, as now we journey, aid our weak endeavour,
Till we gaze on Jesus and rejoice for ever.*

*Father, Son and Spirit. Three in one confessing,
Give us equal glory, equal praise and blessing. Amen*

Gustav Holst
Nunc Dimittis

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum
verbum tuum in pace:
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:
Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis
tuae Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula
saeculorum. Amen.

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all
people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the
glory of thy people Israel.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the
Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.*

INTERVAL

Stephen Paulus
The Road Home

Tell me, where is the road
I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost
So long ago?
All these years I have wandered,
Oh when will I know
There's a way, there's a road
That will lead me home?

After wind, after rain,
When the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream
In the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling
From far away,
There's a voice I can hear
That will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me,
Come away, is the call,
With the love in your heart
As the only song;
There is no such beauty
As where you belong;
Rise up, follow me,
I will lead you home.
(Michael Dennis Browne)

Franz Schubert

Liebe

Liebe rauscht der Silberbach,
Liebe lehrt ihn sanfter wallen,
Seele haucht sie in das Ach
Klagenreicher Nachtigallen –
Liebe Liebe lispelt nur
Auf der Laute der Natur

Weisheit mit dem Sonnenblick,
Große Göttin tritt zurück,
Weiche vor der Liebe.
Nie Erobrern, Fürsten nie
Beugtest du ein Sklavenknie,
Beug' es itzt der Liebe.

Love stirs the silver brook,
Love teaches it to flow more softly;
It breathes the soul into the cry
Of the rich laments of nightingales.
Love, it is love alone that whispers
In the sound of nature.

Wisdom with the glance of the sun,
Great goddess, step back
Out of the way of love!
Never to conquerors, never to princes
Should you bend a knee in slavery,
Bend it now to love!
(Friedrich Schiller)

The Beatles

Free As A Bird

Free as a bird
It's the next best thing to be
Free as a bird
Home
Home and dry
Like a homing bird I fly
As a bird on wing

Whatever happened to the life that we once knew?
Can we really live without each other?
Where did we lose the touch that seemed to mean
so much?
It always made me feel so

Free as a bird...

Whatever happened to the life that we once knew?
It always made me feel so free as a bird
You were only waiting for this moment to be free as
a bird:
It's the next best thing to be

Free as a bird

Kate Rusby arr. Jim Clements

Underneath the Stars

Underneath the stars I'll meet you
Underneath the stars I'll greet you
There beneath the stars I'll leave you
Before you go of your own free will
Go gently

Underneath the stars you met me
Underneath the stars you left me
I wonder if the stars regret me
They come and go of their own free will
Go gently

Here beneath the stars I'm mending
I'm here beneath the stars not ending
Why on earth am I pretending?
I'm here again, the stars befriending
They come and go of their own free will
Go gently

Underneath the stars you met me
And here beneath the stars you left me
I wonder if the stars regret me
I'm sure they'd like me if they only met me
They come and go of their own free will
Go gently
Go gently

Trad. arr. Joshua Pacey

Danny Boy

Oh, Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side.
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling,
It's you, it's you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summer's in the meadow,
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow,
It's I'll be there in sunshine or in shadow, —
Oh, Danny boy, Oh Danny boy, I love you so!

But when ye come, and all the flowers are dying,
If I am dead, as dead I well may be,
Ye'll come and find the place where I am lying,
And kneel and say an Avé there for me.
And I shall hear, though soft you tread above me,
And all my grave will warmer, sweeter be,
For you will bend
and tell me that you love me,
And I shall sleep in peace until you come to me!

Simon & Garfunkel arr. Naomi Crellin

Homeward Bound

I'm sittin in the railway station
Got a ticket for my destination
On a tour of one-night stands
My suitcase and guitar in hand
And every stop is neatly planned
For a poet and a one-man band

Homeward bound
I wish I was
Homeward bound
Home, where my thought's escaping
Home, where my music's playing
Home, where my love lies waiting
Silently for me

Every day's an endless stream
Of cigarettes and magazines
And each town looks the same to me
The movies and the factories
And every stranger's face I see
Remind me that I long to be

Homeward bound
I wish I was
Homeward bound
Home, where my thought's escaping
Home, where my music's playing
Home, where my love lies waiting
Silently for me

Tonight I'll sing my songs again
I'll play the game and pretend
But all my words come back to me
In shades of mediocrity
Like emptiness in harmony
I need someone to comfort me
Homeward bound
I wish I was
Homeward bound
Home, where my thought's escaping
Home, where my music's playing
Home, where my love lies waiting
Silently for me

Irving Berlin arr. Jim Clements

Cheek to Cheek

Heaven, I'm in heaven
And my heart beats so that I can hardly speak
And I seem to find the happiness I seek
When we're out together dancing, cheek to cheek

Heaven, I'm in heaven
And the cares that hung around me through the week
Seem to vanish like a gambler's lucky streak
When we're out together dancing, cheek to cheek

Oh, I love to climb a mountain
And reach the highest peak
But it doesn't thrill me half as much
As dancing cheek to cheek

Oh, I love to go out fishing
In a river or a creek
But I don't enjoy it half as much
As dancing cheek to cheek

Dance with me
I want my arm about you
The charm about you
Will carry me through to heaven

I'm in heaven
And my heart beats so that I can hardly speak
And I seem to find that happiness I seek
When we're out together swinging cheek to cheek

Vernon Duke & Yip Harburg arr. Jim Clements

April in Paris

April's in the air, but here in Paris
April wears a different gown;
You can see her waltzing down the street
A tang of wine is in the air,
I'm drunk with all the happiness that spring can give!
Never dreamed it could be so exciting, to live!

Oh, April in Paris, chestnuts in blossom
Holiday tables under the trees
April in Paris, this is a feeling
No one can ever reprieve

I never knew the charm of spring
Never met it face to face
I never knew my heart could sing
Never missed a warm embrace

'Til April in Paris
Oh whom can I run to?
What have you done to my love?

Fred Ebb & John Kander arr. Alexander L'Estrange
I Get a Kick out of New York, New York
 New York, New York! I get a kick out of you!

I get no kick from champagne
 Mere alcohol doesn't thrill me at all
 So tell me, why should it be true?
 That I get a kick out of you?

Some like a bop-type refrain
 I'm sure that if I heard even one riff
 That would bore me terrifically too
 Yet, I get a kick out of you
 My little town blues are meltin' away.

I get a kick every time I see you
 Standing there before me.
 I get a kick, though it's clear to me
 You obviously don't adore me

I get no kick in a plane
 (even a plane with champagne)
 Flying too high with some guy in the sky
 Is my idea of nothin' to do yet,
 I get a kick out of you.

Start spreading the news, I'm leavin' today
 I want to be a part of it, New York, New York
 These vagabond shoes (I get a kick out of new shoes)
 Are longing to stray right through the very heart of it,
 New York, New York.

I wanna wake up in that city, that doesn't sleep
 (Don't even bother counting sheep)
 To find I'm King of the Hill, head of the list
 Cream of the crop at the top of the heap

These little town blues, are meltin' away
 I'm gonna make a brand-new start of it, in old
 New York
 If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere
 It's up to you, New York, New York
 I get a kick out of you, New York!

VOCES8

The 2023 Grammy-nominated British vocal ensemble VOCES8 is the world's top-streaming classical vocal group and proud to inspire people through music and share the joy of singing. Touring globally, the group performs an extensive repertory both in its a cappella concerts and in collaborations with leading musicians, orchestras, conductors and soloists. Versatility and a celebration of diverse musical expression are central to the ensemble's performance and education ethos which is shared both online and in person.

VOCES8 has performed at many notable venues since its inception in 2005 including Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Berlin Philharmonie, Cité de la Musique Paris, Vienna Konzerthaus, Tokyo Opera City, NCPA Beijing, Sydney Opera House, Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall, Victoria Concert Hall Singapore, and Palacio de Bellas Artes Mexico City amongst many others. This season they perform over 120 concerts in 20 countries.

They have collaborated in concert and in the recording studio with musicians including Paul Simon, Jacob Collier, Eric Whitacre, Christopher Tin, Olafur Arnalds, Cody Fry, Rachel Podger, Jack Liebeck, Bomsori Kim, Jonathan Dove, Chanticleer, The King's Singers, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and others.

VOCES8 is passionate about music education and is the flagship ensemble of music charity the VOCES8 Foundation, alongside ensembles APOLLOS and Lyyra, which actively promotes 'Music Education For All'. Engaging in a broad range of in-person outreach work that reaches up to 40,000 people a year, the Foundation runs an annual programme of workshops and masterclasses at the VOCES8 Centre at St Anne & St Agnes Church, London. Dedicated to supporting promising young singers, VOCES8 awards eight annual choral scholarships through the VOCES8 Scholars initiative. These scholarships are linked to the annual Milton Abbey Summer School at which amateur singers of all ages learn and perform with VOCES8. Through the separate VOCES8 USA Foundation there is another set of twelve talented Scholars.

VOCES8's entrepreneurial and community spirit is fostered by Co-Founders Paul and Barnaby Smith. The Covid-19 pandemic gave the impetus for VOCES8 to transform its already exceptional offerings, nurturing a new online audience community providing a chance to engage with classical music in new ways. Pioneering initiatives include the LIVE From London online festival and the VOCES8 Digital Academy.

LIVE From London was created as a specific response to the pandemic. Winning praise for its collaborative approach with artists, press and audiences around the world the team has delivered twelve digital festivals to date, broadcasting over 150 concerts and selling over 250,000 tickets around the world. This season will see Christmas, Easter and Summer online festivals. The VOCES8 Digital Academy is an online choral programme for high schools, colleges and individuals featuring live interaction with members of the ensemble, live and recorded lectures, and video resources to learn and perform music from the renaissance to today. Both LIVE From London and the Digital Academy are filmed by VOCES8 Studios, the in-house recording company.

Alongside their online work VOCES8 is heard regularly on albums, international television and radio. The ensemble is a Decca Classics artist, also releasing on its own label, VOCES8 Records. The Decca Classics recording of Christopher Tin's "The Lost Birds" featuring VOCES8 and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was nominated for a Grammy-Award in 2023. Their new album is TWENTY, a celebration of the group's first two decades of performing.

Recent releases are *Nightfall, A Choral Christmas, Home* conducted by Eric Whitacre, featuring his extraordinary work *The Sacred Veil* and *Seven Psalms* by Paul Simon in which VOCES8 was thrilled to participate.

VOCES8 is proud to be working with Taylor Scott Davis as the group's Composer-in-Residence and Jim Clements as Arranger-in-Residence. The ensemble has premiered commissions from Jonathan Dove, Roxanna Panufnik, Roderick Williams, Paul Smith, Jason Max Ferdinand, Jocelyn Hagen, Melissa Dunphy, Lucy Walker, Ken Burton, Taylor Scott Davis, Alec Roth, Ben Parry, Ola Gjeilo, Mårten Jansson, Philip Stopford, Owain Park and many others. They publish arrangements of its music, original compositions and educational material with the new digital VOCES8 Publishing house, as well as E.C. Schirmer with whom they curate the VOCES8 Foundation Choral Series, and with Edition Peters with whom they have published two anthologies and a series of single octavos. The VOCES8 Method written by Paul Smith is a renowned and unique teaching tool now available in four languages that adopts music to enhance development in numeracy, literacy and linguistics.

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Sound Beginnings The Firebird

Mikhail Kazakevich piano • **Elena Zozina** piano • **Richard Morris** narrator

Sponsored by The Sheepdrove Trust



A special family-friendly performance of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, arranged for two pianos and narrator.

Originally a ballet and based on a Russian folk tale, *The Firebird* is about a magical glowing bird that Prince Ivan is searching for. The firebird is imprisoned in a castle with a beautiful princess. Ivan rescues the bird and the princess but then his own sister poisons him and the princess. Luckily, the firebird flies to the fountain of youth and with magic water brings Prince Ivan and his beloved princess back to life.

Sound Beginnings concerts are designed as an accessible way to experience classical music, with the environment, programme, length of recital and more tailored to be welcoming to all so that young and old (and everyone in between) can enjoy high quality live music together. Sheepdrove is a disability-inclusive venue.

After each performance there's the chance for guests to bring their own picnics to enjoy in the gardens and grounds at Sheepdrove.

Mikhail Kazakevich

Born in Nizhny Novgorod (Russia), Mikhail Kazakevich studied at the city's State Conservatoire with the famous Soviet pianist and teacher Isaak Katz, who was a pupil of the legendary professor Alexander Goldenweiser. Immediately after graduating with the highest honours, Mikhail joined the professorial staff at the conservatoire, and taught there until 1992, when his burgeoning performing career brought him to the West.

As a result of great success at the International Schubert Competition in Dortmund (Germany), he was engaged to play several concerts with the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra, and also gave numerous solo recitals in Germany and France: he received a Special Award from the Schubert Society (Germany) and a Special Prize from SACEM (France), for his performance of 20th century music. In 1993, Mikhail made his debut at the Wigmore Hall (London) and soon afterwards was signed exclusively to the BMG/Conifer recording label, for which he has made numerous internationally acclaimed recordings. These include works by Bach, Beethoven (the world premiere recording of the composer's final versions of the Second and Fourth concertos, with the English Chamber Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras), Berg, Chopin, Mahler (Kazakevich's own arrangements), Rachmaninov, Schubert and Schumann.

Mikhail has played solo and with orchestras at prestigious venues and festivals in Austria, Germany, France, Russia, Switzerland, Denmark, South Korea and the Middle East. He performed with such conductors as Charles Mackerras, Vladimir Spivakov, Alexander Dmitriev, Moshe Atzmon, Thomas Sanderling. In the United Kingdom, he has given numerous recitals at famous venues, including London's Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, and the South Bank Centre and has made many live broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and BBC1 Television. He regularly performs at Brighton and Newbury Spring festivals (most recently in May 2019 with

Russian Philharmonic Orchestra of Novosibirsk under Thomas Sanderling), St. George's (Bristol), Chopin Society (Westminster Cathedral Hall) and often returns to Russia to play solo and chamber music recitals.

Mikhail has been passionately combining his intensive concert activities with teaching. In the U.K., he started his teaching career at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Cardiff). Since 2005, he is Professor of Piano at Trinity College of Music (London). He is also a visiting Professor at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and frequently gives masterclasses and adjudicates at the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Yehudi Menuhin School (Winter Music Academy for young Malaysian musicians), Dartington International Summer School, BYMT Summer International Piano and Composition School, the University of Aberdeen, Jordan National Conservatoire and the Art Centre in Newport. Mikhail has been a jury member at a number of international piano competitions including those in Newport, Dudley, Hastings and Windsor.

Elena Zozina

Elena Zozina was born in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. She began playing the piano at the age of 5, and at 11 made her debut with the Nizhny Novgorod State Philharmonic at the Kremlin Concert Hall, playing Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1. At 14, she won the Grand Prix and a Special Diploma at the famous D.Kabalevsky's National Piano Competition, awarded by Dmitry Kabalevsky himself. Shortly afterwards, Elena was invited to study with Professor V. Gornostayeva of the Moscow Conservatoire, and later trained at the Gnssins'Academy of Music in Moscow, where her teachers were Professors Y. Libermann and T. Gutman (both pupils of the legendary G. Neuhaus, teacher of S. Richter and E. Gilels).

Whilst studying, Elena gave many recitals and chamber music performances all over Russia, and made several recordings for All Soviet Radio and National TV. In 1990, she graduated from Gnssins' Academy with the highest honours as a solo and chamber music performer, teacher and accompanist and was immediately employed by the Nizhny Novgorod State Philharmonic Society as an artist-in-residence. In 1992, Elena embarked on her first concert tour abroad, with concerts in Dortmund and Bonn, where she received great critical acclaim and audience support. Soon afterwards, she was awarded a full scholarship at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for their post-graduate course, which enabled her to develop her performing and teaching career in the U.K. She has played solo and with orchestras at major venues, including London's Barbican Centre

(W. Lutoslawsky International Festival), the South Bank Centre, Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Chopin Society, St. George's (Bristol), Newbury Spring Festival, Radley Proms, Cowdray Hall (Aberdeen). On her return visits to Russia, she performed at the historic Tchaikovsky's and Rachmaninov's Halls and Glinka Museum in Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod's Philharmonic Hall and other important concert venues. She often appears in a piano duo with her husband, internationally renowned pianist Mikhail Kazakevich.

Elena is also a passionate piano teacher. She is strongly in favour of a highly personal approach to pupils' musical development, and believes that every child has great potential to improve regardless of his or her natural abilities. Many of her pupils have won various piano prizes and music scholarships at prestigious schools such as Trinity (Croydon), Charterhouse (Surrey) and Cranleigh (Surrey).

Richard Morris

Richard Morris comes from South Wales. After a sports scholarship to Millfield School, he studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Banff in Canada. Leonard Bernstein chose him for the role of Celebrant in his Mass for the Opera Company of Boston, a role he has repeated all over Europe, the Barbican and the Southbank in London.

As well as Bernstein, Richard has worked with many of the world's leading composers: Stephen Sondheim, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Maxwell Davies, John Casken, John Metcalf, Gavin Briars and Dominic Muldowney. Directors he has worked with include Sir Peter Hall, Sir Trevor Nunn, Richard Jones, Bill Brydon and Di Trevis. He was Enjolras in the West End hit *Les Misérables*. Roles in opera include *Macbeth*, *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Toreador*, *Papageno* and *Malatesta*. He has been a company member of the Royal National Theatre and worked with many leading orchestras, including the Liverpool Philharmonic with Carl Davis. He has made many CDs, one of which won a Grammy, and has recorded for BBC Radio 2, 3 and 4.



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Flowers Band

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Thomas Doss	<i>Fanfare for the Best</i>
John Golland	<i>Meiso</i>
R. Alexander arr. Roy Newsome	<i>Belford's Carnival March</i>
Daniel Hall	<i>Beneath the Mask</i>
Stijn Aertgeerts	<i>Cuba Libre</i>
Richard Blackford	<i>Orbital</i>
INTERVAL	
Kelly-Marie Murphy	<i>Heliosphere (World Premiere)</i>
John Barry arr. Darrol Barry	<i>Out of Africa</i>
Lucy Pankhurst	<i>Electric (World Premiere)</i>
Jonathan Bates	<i>Pall Mall</i>
Gavin Higgins	<i>Ar Lan y Mor</i>
Oliver Waespi	<i>West Wind</i>

The 2026 Champion Band of Europe and 2024 National Champions of Great Britain, Flowers Band returns to Newbury Spring Festival with a programme that really does have something for everyone, including *Orbital* by Ivor Novello award winning composer, Richard Blackford. This exciting work is Richard's first work for Brass Band and Flowers Band are delighted to be part of the consortium that have commissioned this major piece, with support from BBC Radio 3 and The Radcliffe Trust.

Other programme highlights include a world premiere of a new major work for Euphonium from the pen of Lucy Pankhurst. The piece will be performed by Dan Thomas, the band's Solo Euphonium player, one of the world's most in demand euphonium soloists.

The band will also perform a world premiere of a new concert opener by Kelly-Marie Murphy, a renowned Canadian based composer who has written for ensembles such as the Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto Symphony Orchestras.

The rest of the programme will feature the band's stellar soloists, and will include music from well-known film, and more original music for brass band.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Elizabeth Watts soprano • Tom Fetherstonhaugh conductor

In grateful memory of Chris Boulton
Sponsored by Greenham Trust



Britten *Four Sea Interludes*
Strauss *Four Last Songs*
INTERVAL
Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 6 Pathétique*

In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the death of Benjamin Britten in 1976, we open with arguably his best loved orchestral work, the *Four Sea Interludes* from his opera *Peter Grimes*. This will be followed by Richard Strauss's finest and final vocal composition, his *Four Last Songs*, performed tonight by one of the world's greatest Strauss interpreters, British soprano Elizabeth Watts. Elizabeth Watts is a former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist and is much in demand across the world; we are delighted to welcome her back to the Festival.

After the interval we will hear Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6*, the "*Pathétique*". A deeply emotional work that famously ends in a slow, sorrowful fade to silence, subverting the typical triumphant finale, it was described by Tchaikovsky in letters as "the best thing I ever composed or shall compose". He died less than a week after its premier performance, which he conducted himself. Tonight's conductor, Tom Featherstonhaugh has already appeared at the festival with his own orchestra, *Fantasia*, and we look forward to welcoming him with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, a much-loved Festival favourite.

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
Four Sea Interludes
1 *Dawn*
2 *Sunday Morning*
3 *Moonlight*
4 *Storm*

Benjamin Britten was the most prodigiously gifted of the generation of British composers who grew up between the world wars. Through the influence of his teacher Frank Bridge, he was more open than most to the new developments in music on the continent (there were plans for lessons with Alban Berg) and he trod an individual path through the changing scene of contemporary music. He was scornful of the folksiness of the English pastoral style, and equally unsympathetic to the discordant experiments of the avant-garde (he wrote of '*pleasing in the most serious possible way*'). Critics of his early works disliked his 'cleverness'; the next generation of young musicians were supercilious about his accessibility, whilst more conservative audiences found aspects of his style and subject matter too often challenging. In spite of this, his achievements were colossal: the invention, more or less single-handedly, of English opera; the establishment at Aldeburgh of a major international festival; a series of inspirational works for young people; and recognition at home and abroad as the foremost British composer of his time.

Britten was born in Lowestoft, and grew up within sight and earshot of the sea. He was in California during World War II, when he read an article about the eighteenth-century poet George Crabbe, whose work *The Borough*, tells the stories of characters in a small town on the Suffolk coast. '*In a flash*', said Britten later, '*I realised two things: that I must write an opera, and where I belonged*'. The Koussevitsky Foundation commissioned Peter Grimes, and after eighteen months' work on the libretto and a year composing the music, it premiered at Sadlers Wells in 1945 – the first opera to be staged there after the war. The work includes several orchestral interludes, which have the practical purpose of covering the scene changes, whilst depicting the elemental forces of nature that surround the action. Britten arranged four of them in this orchestral suite, which was first performed shortly after the opera's triumphant premiere.

Grimes is a fisherman, an outsider in a close-knit community, accused by his neighbours of causing the death of his apprentices and eventually hounded to suicide. The opera reveals his complex, sensitive but troubled personality, and his relationships with the townsfolk. The sea almost plays the part of an additional character – it's Grimes' daily environment, a metaphor that can encompass every mood, and a constant backdrop to the action.

Dawn separates the opera's court-room prologue from the start of the main action. Three contrasting musical components work together to suggest stirrings of nature amidst wide skies and the low roar of the sea: wispy phrases for violins and flute, a bubbling arpeggio and long, low chords on brass and timpani.

Sunday Morning evokes the bustle of churchgoers in the town square, with overlapping horns ingeniously suggesting the resonance of bells and a warm melody that will be sung by the teacher Ellen Orford in the ensuing scene.

Britten wrote many nocturnal impressions, none of them 'nocturnes' in the romantic sense. *Moonlight* follows a scene in which Grimes' latest apprentice has fallen to his death down the cliff, and the town mob has been out in search of him. The darkness is tense, illuminated by isolated shafts of moonlight.

The *Storm* is taken from earlier in the opera. The townsfolk all take shelter, leaving Grimes to a powerful soliloquy that runs directly into the orchestral depiction of the storm (a metaphor for Grimes' inner turmoil), with its thunder, howling wind and surging waves. The clouds break, and the harp sweeps up to a visionary chord, to recall Grimes' words at the end of his soliloquy – '*what harbour shelters peace?*'

Richard Strauss (1853–1949)
Four Last Songs
1 *Frühling*
2 *September*
3 *Beim Schlafengehen*
4 *Im Abendrot*

Richard Strauss was composing before Karl Benz had patented the first petrol-engined car, and was still composing after the atom bombs had fallen on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Music was his life's work and in the *Four Last Songs*, written in 1948, he ensured that he left a suitable musical epitaph – a nostalgic, resigned farewell to a world of romantic beauty that he had clung to almost single-handedly whilst everything changed around him. The songs were not planned as a group (a fifth was proposed but never completed), or written in the order in which we hear them – *Im Abendrot* was actually the first to be composed. The compelling shape and evocative title of the final work were settled by Strauss's friend and publisher Ernst Roth.

The first performance in 1950, eight months after Strauss's death, was an event with fascinating international resonances. It took place in the Royal Albert Hall, London, conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler, who had trodden a dangerous line in Germany under the Nazis, continuing to conduct at the highest level whilst arguing in support of Jewish musicians; he was cleared of charges of collaboration at the Nuremberg trials. Kirsten Flagstad, the great Norwegian soprano, hailed as 'the voice of the century', whom Strauss had specifically asked to premiere the work, was soprano soloist. The costs of the performance were underwritten by the Maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahudar, an avid music-lover (pianist, sponsor of the Philharmonia Orchestra and patron of the composer Nikolai Medtner) who wished to add the work to his huge collection of recordings.

The songs distil all Strauss's experience as a song and opera composer: his art of spinning a long vocal line, his love of the soprano voice, his sure instinct for pairing text and music, his warm, flexible harmony, and his rich orchestral palette. In the order of the songs, the course of the seasons parallels the course of a life, from spring through autumn to the end of the year and premonitions of death. The vocal line in *Frühling* soars in joyous expectation, whilst the accompaniment flows through shifting patterns of broken chords. A more thoughtful mood pervades *September*, with melodic figures flowing between voice and accompaniment and a gentle postlude as the month closes its tired eyes.

Beim Schlafengehen takes up the theme of sleep, and the visionary state of dreaming – or is it death and a vision of the afterlife? A rocking figure emerges

from the depths and as the singer sinks into sleep an instrumental interlude takes over the story, opening up into a wonderful melody as the soul rises, step by step, from its bodily form – a melody taken up by the voice in the third verse.

The tempo of the songs has been gradually slowing, the vocal lines becoming more restrained and the reflective instrumental interludes and postludes gradually expanding. *Im Abendrot* opens with the longest introduction, and with its opening word (wir, 'we') brings Pauline, operatic soprano and Strauss's devoted and redoubtable wife of more than fifty years, centre stage alongside the composer in a sunset picture of serene calm. The 'two larks' of the poem are illustrated with high trills on two flutes. In the last line, Strauss makes a telling change to Eichendorff's original text, changing *ist das der Tod?* (*is that death?*) to *ist dies der Tod?* – *is this death?* Under these words, the accompaniment quotes from Strauss's tone poem *Tod und Verklärung* (*Death and Transfiguration*), written almost sixty years earlier. As the final chords die away, the last word is left to the trilling larks.

Frühling (Spring)

In dämmerigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiss und Zier,
Von Licht übergossen
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder,
Du lockest mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart.
Hermann Hesse (1877–1962)

In dusky vaults
I have long dreamt
of your trees and blue skies,
of your scents and the songs of birds.

Now you lie revealed
in glistening splendour,
flushed with light,
like a wonder before me.

You know me again,
you beckon tenderly to me;
all of my limbs quiver
from your blissful presence!
Translation © Emily Ezust

September

Der Garten trauert,
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
Still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
Bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die grossen
Müdgewordnen Augen zu.
Hermann Hesse

The garden is mourning,
the rain sinks coolly into the flowers.
Summer shudders
as it meets its end.

Leaf upon leaf drops golden
down from the lofty acacia.
Summer smiles, astonished and weak,
in the dying garden dream.

For a while still by the roses
it remains standing, yearning for peace.
Slowly it closes its large
eyes grown weary.
Translation © Emily Ezust

Beim Schlafengehen (When falling asleep)

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, lasst von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiss du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.
Hermann Hesse

Now that the day has made me so tired,
my dearest longings shall
be accepted kindly by the starry night
like a weary child.

Hands, cease your activity,
head, forget all of your thoughts;
all my senses now
will sink into slumber.

And my soul, unobserved,
will float about on untrammelled wings
in the enchanted circle of the night,
living a thousandfold more deeply.
Translation © by Emily Ezust

Im Abendrot (At sunset)

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand,
Vom Wandern ruhen wir
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Thäler neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
Nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und lass sie schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,
Dass wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot,
Wie sind wir wandermüde –
Ist dies etwa der Tod?
Joseph Karl Benedikt, Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788–1857)

Through adversity and joy
We've gone hand in hand;
We rest now from our wanderings
Upon this quiet land.

Around us slope the valleys,
The skies grow dark;
Two larks alone are just climbing,
As if after a dream, into the scented air.

Come here and let them whirr past,
For it will soon be time to rest;
We do not wish to get lost
In this solitude.

O wide, quiet peace,
So deep in the red dusk . . .
How weary we are of our travels –
Is this perhaps – death?
Translation © Emily Ezust

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Symphony No. 6 *Pathétique*

- 1 Adagio – Allegro non troppo – Andante
- 2 Allegro con grazia
- 3 Allegro molto vivace
- 4 Finale. Adagio lamentoso – Andante

Emotion, ambition, self-confidence and diffidence all played a part in Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's complex make-up. In his early years, he was destined for the civil service, becoming a boarder in the preparatory class of the St Petersburg School of Jurisprudence at the age of ten. Already a prey to powerful feelings, he remembered the desperate moment when he flung himself at his mother's departing carriage as the most painful moment of his childhood. The boy's piano teacher (much to his later chagrin) discouraged the idea of a musical career, and Tchaikovsky had duly progressed to a post in the Ministry of Justice, when the founding of the Russian Musical Society in 1859, and the subsequent opening of the St Petersburg Conservatory, offered a chance for advanced musical studies. By 1866 he had given up the civil service, graduated from the conservatory and left St Petersburg to teach harmony at the newly-opened Moscow Conservatory. By 1871 his future path was clear at last: 'To tell the truth,' he wrote, 'I have only one interest in life: my success as a composer'.

It was to be a public success that ran in parallel to recurrent artistic insecurity and a turbulent personal life. There were emotional crises connected with his family and friends, a disastrous, short-lived marriage to a former pupil, and ever-present worry about his homosexuality. Tchaikovsky was anxious about his own abilities and deeply sensitive to criticism. He revered Mozart above all other composers, and poured his Russian spirit into the characteristic forms of western European music, drawing censure from the more radical Russian nationalists. In the memoirs of his friends and the artists he worked with, however, we find a brighter picture – a character with a 'captivating inner grace and nobility', charming, warm-hearted and generous, with a keen sense of mischief and a taste for practical jokes.

By the early 1890s, Tchaikovsky was being feted with international honours: membership of the Académie Française, an honorary degree from Oxford, and a triumphant tour of the United States, where he was 'sure I am ten times more famous than in Europe'. On his return, he worked on a symphony, scrapped it, and started again. The new work, he said, was a 'Programme' Symphony' – a symphonic story whose inner meaning he nevertheless refused to reveal. This time, the composing took off; he wrote of his pride in the work, and his brother, Modest, described him as 'as serene and cheerful as at any period in his existence'.

Tchaikovsky completed the Sixth Symphony between February and April 1893, and conducted the first performance in St Petersburg on 28 October. Five days later he was taken ill, and on 6 November he died. The following day an editorial comment appeared in the press: 'The most contradictory rumours are afloat in the city with regard both to the causes of P I Tchaikovsky's illness, and to his death.' Speculation about the circumstances continues to this day. The medical account gave cholera as the reason, contracted through drinking unboiled water. On the basis of more recently-reported evidence, a case has been made that he had been instructed to commit suicide by a 'court of honour' of his former classmates at the School of Jurisprudence, to avoid implicating them and the School in an imminent public scandal.

Not surprisingly, much has been read into the music on the basis of these speculations. But, however much he appears to wear his heart on his sleeve, Tchaikovsky had already warned us not to link his life and music too directly. 'Every work of art,' he wrote, 'even a musical composition, is objective... Without any special reason for rejoicing I may be moved by the most cheerful creative mood, and vice versa, a work composed in the happiest surroundings may be touched with dark and gloomy colours.'

The huge opening movement blends familiar symphonic procedures with picturesque, almost balletic episodes, fearsome emotional climaxes and several theatrical coups. The slow introduction sets a solemn tone and foreshadows the nervous theme of the Allegro. A lushly romantic theme frames the second group, which also includes scalic melodies in fluid, dancing rhythms for solo wind instruments that we shall never hear again. A solo clarinet reminisces with the 'lush' melody, before a sudden thunderclap (formally, the opening of the development section) opens the floodgates of emotion. The temperature of the music rises and falls, as it works the opening theme over pulsating rhythms and takes in the phrases of a sombre chorale in the brass. The return of the opening theme in full (the 'recapitulation') is no relaxation, but another stage on the way to the movement's greatest climax – a colossal dialogue between the brass and the rest of the orchestra, over a relentless timpani roll, marked quadruple forte. The lush melody and the clarinet's reminiscence return, and the coda walks us thoughtfully away from the whole shattering experience in spreading melodic phrases, while the strings pace through eight repetitions of a downward scale.

The swaying five-beat bars of the second movement are often described as a 'limping waltz', but there is nothing disabled about the floating lilt of the music. Tchaikovsky's marking 'con grazia' points rather to an extra buoyancy given by the five-pulse metre. The movement is built like a traditional symphonic Minuet, as a three-part structure, with a middle section of contrasting rhythm and a gently reflective coda.

The third movement starts as a scherzo with chattering strings and wisps of melody that gradually coalesce into the march theme that dominates the movement. Moods are ambiguous – the scherzo can be airy or sinister; the march can be stirring or threatening. By the end, the scherzo element is forgotten, and the march takes over, complete with blazing brass and booming bass drum.

As Tchaikovsky was well aware, the slow, desolate final movement is the symphony's most original and compelling feature, confounding any expectation of a Beethovenian battle from darkness into light. The opening theme, in which the falling line of the melody alternates between first and second violins, is presented in an anguished harmonisation before it sinks slowly to growl in the lowest depths of the bassoon. The second theme (based on the same falling pattern) at first appears to offer a different mood – in a major key and settled rhythm, and marked 'gently and with devotion' – but it soon builds to an impassioned climax. When the two themes reappear, their roles are reversed: the opening idea becomes more and more highly charged, but the second theme, introduced by a single gong stroke and a solemn brass chorale, is bleakly in the minor key, and dies away offering no consolation.

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Elizabeth Watts

With a voice described by *International Record Review* as 'one of the most beautiful Britain has produced in a generation' Elizabeth Watts is 'now established as one of Britain's leading sopranos' (*The Guardian*) and 'a national treasure' (*The Arts Desk*). Her debut recording of Schubert's *Lieder* for SONY Red Seal, a *Gramophone* 'Editor's Choice', was hailed for its 'milky timbre and interpretative maturity' (*Financial Times*), 'technical mastery' (*Gramophone*) and 'radiant delivery' (*BBC Music*). Now a prolific recording artist, she has released discs of Bach's *Cantatas*, Strauss' *Lieder*, Mozart's *Opera Arias*, Alessandro Scarlatti's *Arias* (which she researched), CPE Bach's *Magnificat*, JS Bach's *St John & St Matthew Passions*, Handel's *Brookes Passion* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*, to name a few, winning many awards and accolades along the way. Most recently her recording of Britten's *Spring Symphony* with Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra was named *Orchestral Album of the year* by *Classica* magazine.

A former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, Elizabeth is much in demand as a recitalist. She has given recitals at the UK's leading venues, including Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Purcell Room, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Hay and Cheltenham Festivals. Further afield, Elizabeth has performed at prestigious venues and festivals such as the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Hardanger Festival in Norway, with the Orquesta de Radio Televisión Española in Madrid, at the Bad Kissinger Summer Festival, at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and at the Tonhalle, Zürich.

On the concert platform, Elizabeth sings a broad repertoire, from Bach to Brahms and Strauss, through to premieres by composers such as Richard Blackford and Ryan Wigglesworth. Performances include Ligeti's *Le grand macabre* and Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with Sir Simon Rattle and the LSO, Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with BBCSO and Sakari Oramo for the BBC Proms, and with Andrés Orozco-Estrada and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra; *The Last Night of the Proms* with Sakari Oramo, Mozart's *Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra and Boston Handel & Haydn

Society with Harry Christophers (also a CD); *Mass in C Minor* with Akademie für Alte Musik and Daniel Reuss and with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Olari Elts; Brahms' *Requiem* with the LPO and Yannick Nézet-Séguin (on CD); Bach's *St Matthew and St John Passions* (concert and recording) with the Academy of Ancient Music and Richard Egarr; Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* and Haydn's *Scena di Berenice* with the SCO; Mahler's *Symphonies 2 and 4* and Strauss' *Lieder* with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra; *No. 4* with the LSO and Michael Tilson Thomas, the Philharmonia Orchestra and Vladimir Ashkenazy, and with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Vassily Petrenko; Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and the BBC SSO and Kurtág's *Kafka Fragments* for Soprano and Violin with the Hebrides Ensemble, as well as performances with Bachakademie Stuttgart and Hans-Christoph Rademan and with RIAS Kammerchor, Berlin; and Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* with the Mark Morris Dance Group at Teatro Real, Madrid (on DVD). Her world premiere performance of Richard Blackford's *Songs of Nadia Anjuman* with the Britten Sinfonia, in which she simultaneously conducted, received multiple 5-star reviews, was named a concert of the year in *The Times* and is available as a live performance on CD.

Now firmly established as a lyric soprano, Elizabeth's recent operatic roles include Aspasia in Mozart's *Mitridate* (Garsington Opera) and Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro* for English National Opera). Previous operatic appearances include Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) and Marzelline (*Fidelio*) for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) for Santa Fe Opera and Welsh National Opera, for whom Elizabeth has also sung Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*). On the concert platform her lyric repertoire now includes Britten's *War Requiem* and Elgar's *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, giving the Polish premiere of the latter.

Elizabeth was a chorister at Norwich Cathedral and gained a First in Archaeology and Prehistory at Sheffield University, before attending the Royal College of Music. Among her many prizes are the Kathleen Ferrier Award, the MIDEM Classique Outstanding Young Artist Award and the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize. A former member of English National Opera's Young Singers' Programme, she has been an Artist in Residence at the Southbank Centre, London and is the recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award. More recently, Elizabeth was made an honorary Doctor of Music by Sheffield University and a Fellow of the Royal College of Music.



Tom Fetherstonhaugh

Tom Fetherstonhaugh is Artistic Director of Fantasia Orchestra, with whom he made his BBC Proms debut in August 2024 conducting two performances at the Royal Albert Hall. Tom founded Fantasia Orchestra in 2016, and the orchestra has developed a busy schedule at festivals and venues across the country.

In the 2025/26 season, Tom makes debuts with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Philharmonia Orchestra and Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, and returns to the BBC Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, and the Ulster Orchestra. Recent collaborations include with the Orchestra of Opera North, Royal Northern Sinfonia, a joint concert with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra, and a concert for peace in the Korean Demilitarised Zone.

As the Assistant Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra between 2022-2024, Tom conducted 70 performances including five weeks in the BSO's main season series.

He has performed with soloists including Alena Baeva, Alim Beisembayev, Julian Bliss, Lucy Crowe, Jess Gillam, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Thomas Gould, Isata Kanneh-Mason, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Vadym Kholodenko, Tasmin Little, Jennifer Pike, Steven Osborne, and Maria Włoszczowska.

In the operatic repertoire, Tom has been assistant conductor for Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Opera North), Bernstein's *Candide* (Welsh National Opera), Verdi's *Macbeth* and David Matthews' *Anna* (The Grange Festival), and worked on productions of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* (The Grange Festival).

Tom started his musical journey with the Suzuki method of violin playing, and was a chorister of Westminster Abbey. He read music at Merton College, Oxford, and studied conducting with Sian Edwards at the Royal Academy of Music. Tom graduated from the Academy with Distinction and a DipRAM prize in 2021, and was awarded Associate Honours (ARAM) in 2024 for his contribution to the music profession.



Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

One of the UK's best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is known for championing the role of culture in people's lives. Based at Lighthouse, Poole, the Orchestra is resident in Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth, Southampton and Yeovil, and performs in towns and villages across the region. A leading arts charity, it is the largest cultural provider in the South West of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

The Daily Telegraph described Mark Wigglesworth's opening performance as Chief Conductor in 2024 as "a fine, fierce debut" Celebrated globally for his outstanding musicianship, extraordinary interpretations, and breadth of repertoire, Wigglesworth's first season has magnified the BSO's reputation for the highest quality music-making The Orchestra boasts an enviable list of named conductors, including Principal Guest Conductor Chloe Van Soeterstede, Marin Alsop, David Hill MBE, Kirill Karabits and Andrew Litton.

In 2025/26, the BSO welcomes baritone Roderick Williams QBE as Artist-in-Residence Williams performs five times across the season, including Zemlinsky's *Lyrical Symphony*, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, and a 24-song cycle, *An English Winterreise*, The Orchestra also introduces Dani Howard as its Celebrated Composer, a series that shines a spotlight on new British music It shares seven performances of Howard's music, including the UK premiere of her *Saxophone Concerto* with Jess Gillam. Further highlights of the season include debut performances from organist Anna Lapwood, cellist Hugo Svedberg, guitarist Plfnio Fernandes, viola player Timothy Ridout, among more. The Orchestra's celebrated Digital Concert series continues into its sixth year, with 19 live performances broadcast globally from Poole.

The Orchestra is celebrated for its pioneering community-based BSO Participate work, from partnerships with health and care providers to inclusive events in schools and with music education hubs. In the 2025/26 season, highlights include the expansion of its creative health programme with Dorset County Hospital and Arts in Hospital into further Dorset Health Care sites, and an extension of its support for Community and Wellbeing Orchestras supporting a range of needs across the region from Bodmin, Boscombe and Bristol to Somerset and Southampton.

Following international attention for igniting change, BSO Resound – the world's first professional disabled-led ensemble at the core of a major orchestra, and winner of the 2019 Royal Philharmonic Society's Impact Award – continues to challenge perceptions. The group unites with Calleva Assistant Conductor Enyi Okpara and members of the National Open Youth Orchestra to share its live music in schools in 2025/26.

A National Portfolio of Arts Council England, the BSO is a registered charity and relies on generous philanthropic support from individual donors, gifts in wills, corporate partners and charitable trusts and foundations. In 2024, the Orchestra was delighted to receive its largest ever funding pledge from a charitable trust a grant award of £300,000 over three years (2025-27) from the Garfield Weston Foundation towards BSO Participate.

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The Festival is committed to music education for children and the community.

Once again, we are delighted to be able to invite all school aged children and older students to attend and participate in our FREE workshops, masterclass and afternoon children's performances at the Corn Exchange, Newbury.

We must thank all the generous sponsors and supporters, without whom this would never be achievable, but also our hard-working headteachers, teachers and adult supervisors who organise the children to be out of class to join us, over sometimes the most difficult and trying circumstances.

“Music enhances the education of children by helping them to make connections and broadening the depth with which they think and feel. If we are to culturally literate people, music must be a vital part of our children’s education.”

Yo-Yo-Ma



February
Soul Sanctuary

Members of Soul Sanctuary Gospel choir will be working with local secondary age students for a day workshop. Those students will then be invited to perform in the free outdoor performance on Sunday 17 May (see page 121).

9 May
Festival Parade

Back for the second year, this is an opportunity for local performers to take part in the parade moving through town, culminating in the Market Square. More information is on page 15.

12 May
RANT

RANT will host a special afternoon performance for local school age children. They'll be demonstrating some of the fiddle techniques and Scottish folk tunes that are central to their performances. See page 56 for details of their evening concert.

14 May
G&S

Around the world (of G&S) in 60 minutes! A special hour-long session introducing local school students to the world of operetta ahead of their full evening performance the same day (see page 87).

16 May
Big Sing Saturday

An opportunity to celebrate singing in all it's forms. Local choirs are invited to come along and take part. Audiences are invited to come and go across the whole day. Further information in on page 108.

16 May
Master class

Jess Gillam is passionate about music education, and we're delighted she's hosting a free masterclass (see page 111) with talented young saxophonists from the Newbury area.



17 May
Soul in the Market Place

Members of the Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir will perform with some of the students from the February education workshops for this free open-air event. See page 121 for further information.

19 May
Ballet Central

Schools, dance classes and ballet companies are invited to come and learn from the free Open Company Class. This special afternoon session will feature extracts of the full evening show (see page 143).

19 May
Ensemble Augelletti

The Ensemble will stay on to visit three local primary schools the day after their concert (see page 136) to deliver a "Georgian Tea Party" concert introducing students to music of the 17th and 18th Centuries.

21 May
Festival Chorus

School age students are invited to listen to the rehearsal of Brahms' German Requiem with Spring Festival Chorus in St Nicolas Church (see page 169).

Lunchtimes Recitals

The balcony seats in the Corn Exchange are made available to local school students for each of the lunchtime Young Artist Recital series – for free.

Details of these free opportunities will be sent to all schools in advance; however places are limited and are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please contact Jane Pickering 01635 528766 or email jane@newburyspringfestival.org.uk for further information.

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