

# PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

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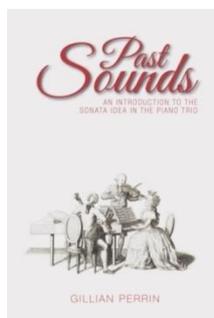
Charity no 1067071

## NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 54 AUTUMN 2022

### A special invitation

We are pleased to announce that our members have been invited to attend the launch of the new book by Gillian Perrin entitled "Past Sounds". We have followed the progress of this book for some time now and as it deals with matters of form put into context through the piano trio medium it will be of special interest to our members.



Described as a talk-recital this will be held in the David Josefowitz Hall, Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, NW1 5HT on Sunday 30 October from 6.30-8.30pm. Gillian will make a presentation

and her talk will be illustrated by live performance from the young Astatine Piano Trio - winners of the Piano Trio Society Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition 2022.

We hope that members and friends of our Society will join us. There will also be an opportunity to socialise over a complimentary glass of wine and nibbles. **Please note that this is an invitation only event as numbers will be limited. Please book by phone or email and we will keep a list of names.**

Telephone: 01242 620736

Email: [info@pianotriosociety.org.uk](mailto:info@pianotriosociety.org.uk)

### STOP PRESS

Piano Trio Day will be held **on Sunday 5 March 2023 at Clarendon Muse, Watford.**

Further details will follow.

### In this issue



**John Carmichael OAM**

Australian composer member John Carmichael is one of our members who will be celebrating the first performance of his piano trio. We have also been informed of a number of other piano trios which may not be known to you and will be featuring these in an article on page 3

### David Owen Norris

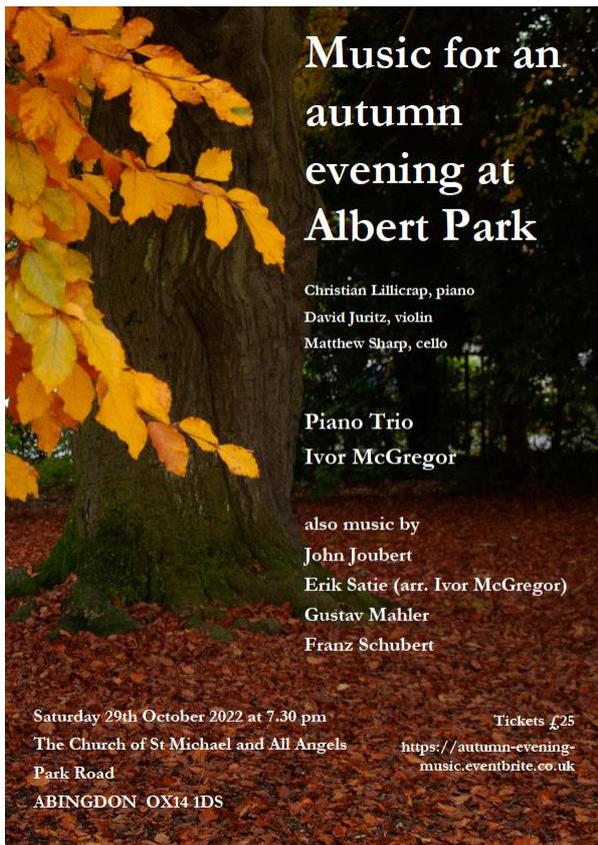
Music and drama combined earlier this year when pianist David Owen Norris and his son, the award winning playwright Barney Norris (*The remains of the Day*) presented a programme entitled *Wellspring* which featured the age-old story of a boy and his father. This particular father and son explored the people and stories that shape us. Their performances were accompanied by music performed by David and described by the Toronto Globe and Mail as "quite possibly the most interesting pianist in the world".

Further information on page 8

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## Some piano trios which have been brought to our attention



**Music for an  
autumn  
evening at  
Albert Park**

Christian Lillcrap, piano  
David Juritz, violin  
Matthew Sharp, cello

**Piano Trio  
Ivor McGregor**

also music by  
John Joubert  
Erik Satie (arr. Ivor McGregor)  
Gustav Mahler  
Franz Schubert

Saturday 29th October 2022 at 7.30 pm  
The Church of St Michael and All Angels  
Park Road  
ABINGDON OX14 1DS

Tickets £25  
<https://autumn-evening-music.eventbrite.co.uk>

This poster includes mention of a piano trio by **Ivor McGregor** who may be familiar to our readers for the Proofreading services he offers. He provides services as a composer, arranger, editor, proof reader and transcriber of music onto Sibelius, also working as a freelance editor for Faber from 1991. He has proofread works by many contemporary composers. Having performed as a classical musician for most of his life he branched out first into proofreading music then more recently he has also been working on text.

Email: [ivorproofreader@gmail.com](mailto:ivorproofreader@gmail.com)

Telephone: 07516 698300

<https://ivormcgregorproofreading.co.uk>

We have also been contacted by Kevin Allen regarding a piano trio by **Huge Blair**. Our investigations reveal that Kevin has recently written and published a biography of Hugh Blair (1864-1932), who was Organist of Worcester Cathedral in the 1890s and a close friend and supporter of Elgar in the early stages of his career. Kevin writes:

“Blair was a progressive conductor of the Worcester Festival Choral Society and a prolific composer, mainly of Church and Organ music, but he also produced a single Piano Trio, published in 1897. It is a substantial four-movement work that has remained unknown. I have obtained a copy from the British Library and would like to take steps to give the work a hearing but do not know where to start. I wonder if you might be able to suggest an ensemble which might be interested in investigating this forgotten British Trio of the late Victorian period?”

We passed on the score to our Trustee, composer Dr Chris Brammeld, who has looked at the score and can supply copies of the parts if requested. He tells us it would be suitable for a student trio. He writes “It’s mostly an attractive piece and there are moments of interest such as a central 7/4 section in E flat, in a Scherzando 2/4 movement in B flat minor. I personally find it not the most adventurous piece, and the first movement is quite rhythmically repetitious. The Largo is rather nice and starts with a long chorale-like piano solo. The Finale actually gathers in excitement (lots of piano tremolos!) and builds to a triumphant end.”

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## **Première of the new Piano Trio "Towards the Light" by John Carmichael OAM**

We are always pleased when members let us have their news and we congratulate our member John Carmichael whose new piano trio, "Towards the Light", was premiered at the Deal Festival on Monday 11 July in St Georges Hall, Deal. The performers, Michael Dussek (piano), Paul Manley (violin) and Andrew Fuller (cello), are all members of Primavera.

John has kindly let us have details of the new work.

"It is said that Debussy gave each of his Preludes its title after he had written it. In other words the image came out of the finished work. The subtitle "Towards the Light" came earlier in the writing of this Piano Trio, in fact during work on the last movement. It was then that the muted endings of the first two movements seemed to be looking for resolution in a burst of light and colour in the final movement and - yes- sometimes what has already been written dictates to the composer what should follow - the composer may have to negotiate with his muse!

There are elements of drama and conflict in the first movement with violin, cello and piano each having their solo spots but also vying with each other in some unexpected changes of mood and tempo. The opening arpeggio-like motif on the piano appears at two crucial moments further on, particularly in the final bars.

While the middle movement leans towards a mood of resignation in the melodic intertwining of violin and cello, it too has its moments of drama. The piano supports with a filigree of accompanying textures until emerging as enigmatic soloist.

The violin and cello pizzicato already sets the scene for the change of mood - the piano flies solo and after a short pause the trio launches into lively activity, many changes of tempo and mood aiming to move towards an affirmation of what? Each listener will hopefully have their own interpretation: subjective response to all music is the listener's own individual province of experience.

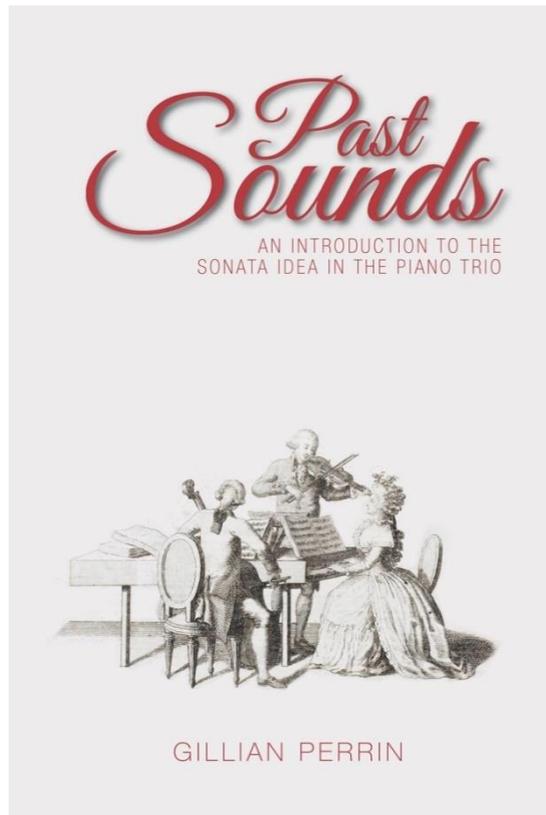
The combination of violin, cello and piano offers a rich treasury of possibilities for the composer. There are many masterpieces already in the repertoire, and it will surely continue as an inspiring medium for both composers and performers."

John Carmichael was born in Australia but has lived in England for much of his life. He has written a wide variety of works with many featuring the piano. He was also Musical Director for a Spanish Dance company which led to the composition of perhaps his most well-known work, *Concierto Folklórico*.

John was a pioneer in music therapy. He developed music teaching and music appreciation projects at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and Netherden Mental Hospital in Surrey. In June 2011 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services as a composer and concert pianist.

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Introducing the new book on the Sonata Idea in the Piano Trio by Gillian Perrin

Austin Macauley Publishers, 2022 ISBN 9781528991605

Some reviews:

*"... enthralling ... no more suitable guide can be sought than in the pages of this well-produced book, and the informative text of its gifted author."*

Robert Matthew-Walker, Musical Opinion

*"... really excellent, sound and unusual in its approach ... thoroughly recommended."*

Jane Faulkner, Founder and Chairman of the Piano Trio Society

*"... wonderfully compelling, lucid and engaging new book on the sonata...opens the topic out to diverse readers."*

Ayla Lepine, Ahmanson Fellow, The National Gallery, London

*"... ideal for sixth form music students ... would also appeal to a much larger audience... easy to read and digest ..."*

Clare Dawson, former Director of Music, The London Oratory School

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Gillian Perrin’s lifelong interest in the formal structures of classical music began at school when she was taught by a former pupil of the renowned music analyst Donald Francis Tovey. She went on to study music at Oxford, followed by postgraduate research on the early sonata under Egon Wellesz – taking her also to search rare collections in London, Cambridge and Vienna. She worked as cataloguer for an antiquarian music bookseller, and now enjoys freelance writing and lecturing about music. She lives in north London with her husband, a 19th-century square fortepiano and a wilful garden.

## **Gillian Perrin tells us about her new book.**

This is a book about classical music – for people who say they love music “but don’t understand how it works”, as well as for performers and music students of all ages. Proposing that deeper enjoyment begins with an understanding of music’s basic structures, the book describes how the simple template of earlier dance-songs was adapted by composers writing music for instruments. The instrumental sonata became one of the great formal frameworks of western music: in symphonies, concertos, chamber music and solo sonatas, it dominated concert music for some 250 years – yet it is little understood by many music lovers. To simplify this vast field, *Past Sounds* singles out for study “sonatas” for piano trio – piano, violin and ‘cello. These instruments have well-contrasted and easily identifiable sounds, and as the story unfolds the reader is introduced to many rarely heard but beautiful works for piano trio. This is a lively, clearly-written narrative as well as a handbook for subsequent listening. The book has two distinctive features. Firstly, technical terms are carefully explained, and for those not familiar with music notation, audio clips in an accompanying website reproduce the actual sound of the music described. Secondly, in a broad historical sweep from mid-18th to 20th centuries, the development of the sonata is followed in its context of contemporary arts and literature – demonstrating how the sonata idea of classical music well deserves to be understood and valued as a western cultural archetype alongside other great artistic and literary forms.

Copy available from Austin Macauley Publishers, 0207 038 821225, Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5LQ [publicity@austinmacauley.com](mailto:publicity@austinmacauley.com).

Also available via Amazon, Waterstones, Barnes and Noble and all good booksellers

Paperback RRP £25.99/\$43.95 9781528991599

Ebook RRP £3.50/\$4.50 9781528991612

Hardback RRP £31.99/\$57.95 9781528991605

**We welcome any comments and reviews of the book.**

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## More dates for your diary

**We are delighted to report that Conway Hall continues to support the piano trio medium and has kindly sent us the following list of concerts taking place on Sundays at 6.30pm.** Members will know that Conway Hall is a charity which relies on support via its activities and charitable donations and continues to display our publicity so we are pleased to bring their work to your attention. We welcome any further concert listings members might have.

### 9 October - Minerva Piano Trio

This trio featured in one of our previous events when our President Peter Frankl was present. To celebrate their new album release on SOMM, the Minerva Piano Trio's programme will feature a new arrangement of Stravinsky's Pulcinella Suite by Richard Birchall, made to celebrate the ballet suite's 100th anniversary in 2022. We will also hear one of Richard's own compositions and a further new arrangement of Caroline Shaw's piece by Annie Yim, the trio's pianist.



**Minerva Piano Trio with our President Peter Frankl**

Beethoven - Trio in D 'Ghost' Op.70/1 (1808)

Caroline Shaw (arr. Annie Yim) - Gustave Le Gray (2012, arr. 2022)

Richard Birchall - Contours (2014)

Haydn - Trio in G 'Gypsy Rondo' Hob XV:25 (1795)

Stravinsky (arr. Richard Birchall) - Pulcinella Suite (1922, arr. 2021)

**Website link:** <https://www.conwayhall.org.uk/whats-on/event/minerva-piano-trio/>

### 23 October - Greenwich Trio



Described by Bernard Greenhouse as "the new Beaux Arts Trio", the Greenwich Trio are earning a reputation for their performances of a wide range of repertoire. Their performance for Conway Hall foregrounds the contributions made to the repertoire by Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn, alongside their male colleagues.

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Clara Schumann - Piano Trio in G minor Op.17 (1846)

Clara Schumann - Three Romances for violin and piano Op.22 (1853)

Fanny Mendelssohn - Fantasie in G minor for cello and piano (1830)

Felix Mendelssohn - Song without Words in D for cello and piano Op.109 (1845)

Brahms - Trio No.3 Op.101 (1886)

**Website link:** <https://www.conwayhall.org.uk/whats-on/event/greenwich-trio-pre-concert-talk/>

## 13 November - Trio Havisham

The 2022 CAVATINA Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition was adjudicated by Roger Wright CBE of Britten Pears Arts and featured 8 trios from conservatoires across the UK competing for a cash prize and an offer of a paid performance as part of the Sunday Concerts series at Conway Hall.



In a competition showcasing the best of musical talent, Trio Havisham from the Royal Northern College of Music took home the first prize and we are excited to welcome them for their Conway Hall debut.

Martinu - Trio No.1 in C minor 'Cinq pièces brèves' H193 (1930)[

Schumann - Trio No.2 in F Op.80 (1847)

Dvorak - Trio No.4 in E minor 'Dumky' Op.90 (1891)

**Website link:** <https://www.conwayhall.org.uk/whats-on/event/trio-havisham/>

## 20 November - Schwarzenberg Trio



The Schwarzenberg Trio's Conway Hall début was one of the casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are so pleased that we are finally able to welcome this distinguished Austrian ensemble to play for us. *What I love about the Schwarzenberg's performance is that for all of its technical finesse, the players are not afraid to open up their tonal palettes and fully embrace the composer's dynamic*

*extremes and sudden stylistic detours (Jed Distler, Classics Today).*

Haydn - Trio in C Op.86/1 (1797)

Ravel - Trio in A minor M.67 (1914)

Brahms - Trio No.1 in B Op.8 (1853 rev. 1889)

**Website link:** <https://www.conwayhall.org.uk/whats-on/event/schwarzenberg-trio/>

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## David Owen Norris tells of his introduction to piano trios in the play “Wellspring” and an extract is reproduced here with his permission

“The musical world I had started to discover grew richer and deeper thanks to Jack Courtenay, the new vicar – a clarinettist and Colditz escapee. Jack was married to Alethea, a cellist, and their first care once they arrived in the village, was to seek out a good violinist to play chamber-music with them. They found Mrs. Couling, a singularly well-preserved elderly lady from the village of Flore, and quickly fixed up a music party. Now they needed a pianist, and they found me.

The vicarage – nowadays the Old Vicarage, of course – was just over the road from our house, and I walked up the long drive agog to see what would happen – what was this ‘chamber music’? We played Mozart, I recall, and Beethoven too. Marvellous! Mrs. Couling lost no time in inviting me to accompany her WI Choir in Flore.

I was lucky to know her. She had been at the Royal College of Music before the Great War, so she had known Sir Hubert Parry, and Sir Charles Stanford and Vaughan Williams – actually known those great, almost legendary, figures of English music. When I think back now to that first afternoon playing in Long Buckby vicarage, I realize that I was presented with my whole professional life in embryo – performing, English music, Keble College and its connection with religion, choirs, the performance of music, sight-reading! – it was all there, on that one afternoon.

Since we met by playing piano trios, Mrs. Couling took me to a piano trio concert in Carnegie Hall – not that one, but the Carnegie Hall attached to Northampton Public Library. It was quite a concert: Hugh Bean, Daniel Barenboim and Jacqueline DuPré! They played Beethoven.”

Thank you David for this interesting article. If any members would like to share their own experiences regarding their introduction to playing piano trios we would be pleased to hear from them. We also welcome any articles and news!

**Contact the Editor: [info@pianotriosociety.org.uk](mailto:info@pianotriosociety.org.uk) or (+44)01242 620736**