

# PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 44 SUMMER 2019

### Piano Trio Day

In this issue we report on Piano Trio Day which this year took place in Gloucester with tutors Michael Bochmann MBE, Nicholas Roberts and John Thwaites. We were pleased to welcome five trios who received coaching on pieces ranging from Mozart to Rebecca Clarke. A review can be found on page 4.

### Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competitions

We continue our work with young piano trios as we plan two further Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competitions next year which will take place at Chethams School of Music, Manchester, below. The Junior Competition is on **Sunday 16 February** when the Jury will be the distinguished violinist and teacher Richard Deakin, Jonathan Aasgaard, principal cello in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Melvyn Cooper, pianist, teacher and Vice Chairman of our Society.



The Senior Competition will be on **Sunday 22 March** with a Jury of Professor Susie Mészáros, violin/viola, teacher, chamber and orchestral musician, Nicholas Trygstad - principal cello in the Hallé Orchestra and Professor John Thwaites, Head of Keyboard Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

### Conway Hall Sunday Concerts



**Moncure Conway**

We have been offered an opportunity to collaborate with the famous London venue Conway Hall in Red Lion Square. Sunday concerts there have been a tradition for many years and have introduced audiences to a wide range of music by many distinguished performers. Founded in the 1880s, the chamber music concert series is the longest-running of its kind in Europe. Conway Hall was purpose-built in 1929 to host concerts and lectures, and they have continued there until the present day. The ethos of “affordable classical music for all” still remains. We take a look at the hall and its history on page 8.

### Piano Trio Concerts at St Peter's

We continue our association with St Peter's Church Notting Hill when the Monday lunchtime concerts on 16th, 23rd and 30th September will programme piano trios.

**Details: [www.nottinghillconcerts.co.uk](http://www.nottinghillconcerts.co.uk)**

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## Piano Trio Profile.....Albany Trio



### **Philippa Harrison - piano, Gemma Sharples - violin, Verity Evanson - cello**

Described as having ‘fastidious musicianship’ (Musical Opinion Quarterly), the Albany Trio is a diverse and innovative ensemble whose repertoire focuses on works by female composers - both current and historic - alongside the traditional canon of piano trio music.

Founded in 2010, the Trio recently gave their BBC Radio 3 debut lunchtime concert live on International Women's Day, and have appeared at major venues around the UK. The ensemble has been selected as Park Lane Group Young Artists, and are featured artists in Making Music's Concert Promoters' Guide, and the Concordia Foundation. In 2014, the Trio were awarded the Richard Carne Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music where they curated a hugely successful inaugural Women in Music festival, which was both sold out and featured in *The Telegraph*.

The trio were recent finalists at the St Martin's International Chamber Competition and winners of the Gwyneth George Award from the Piano Trio Society. Versatile and wide-ranging in their work, the trio are experienced workshop leaders, as representatives of Live Music Now and Chamber Music 2000. The ensemble regularly attend masterclasses, receiving scholarships to the International Musicians Seminar: Prussia Cove, a winter residency at the Banff Centre, Pro Corda and the Dartington International Summer School.

Committed to bringing works by female composers to new audiences, the Albanys regularly collaborate with composers, recently commissioning their fourth Trio, a new work entitled *The Orchid and its Hunters* by Judith Bingham, which was premièred live on BBC Radio 3. They have previously premiered works by Charlotte Bray, Judith Weir, and Josephine Stephenson, with more commissions planned for the future.

*The Albany Trio is grateful to Francis and Caron Fernandes for their generous support*

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## News from Composer Members.....

**Heleen Verleur** and **Nadia Lasserson** were the speakers at our “Chamber Music with Piano for Early Learners” event last year. In addition to her three books of Piano Trios for Young Players, published by Alfred, Heleen has written many piano compositions for young players including most recently a piece for sixteen performers playing eight pianos! Nadia has sent us a review of Heleen’s **Piano Animals for four hands and six hands**.

*Heleen Verleur, based in The Netherlands, is well-known for her chamber music and ensemble pieces for young pianists. Her Piano trios have already been reviewed in Piano Journal and I had the privilege of sharing a workshop with her last year and hearing several of her Trios performed by young school children. Heleen Verleur certainly understands the elementary stages of piano study and these piano ensemble pieces are no exception. The five pieces were commissioned by the 2017 Gromlanger Piano Festival and the composer states that they are “intended for everyone with a playful spirit, independent of age”. “Monkeys”, “Wild Pigs”, “Whales”, “Giraffes” and “The horse of uncle Loeks” all depict the various characteristics of each title offering young people huge fun in learning these quirky pieces and the composer is well aware of maintaining childrens’ interests by making both parts equally interesting, relevant, and melodious. The pieces can be performed separately or all linked together into a longer work. The same music is also arranged for 6 hands on one piano which offers even greater musical fun in the preparation of these charming pieces for concert performance.*

Composer **Christopher Brummel** has two important premières in September when his **String Quartet no 1** receives its first UK performance by the Tippet Quartet on 19<sup>th</sup> September and a new work for Voces8 has its world première in New York on 21 September. At the same time Chris will be busy as Artistic Director of the **Penkhull Festival of Music and Art** in Stoke on Trent which takes place from 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

Forthcoming performances of music by **Ian Wilson** include **A Haunted Heart** for solo piano (1995), **Hungry Ghosts** for tenor and piano (1995). **The Harbour** for SATB choir (2007). **Ground Out** (2019) for violin, Irish harp and soundtrack. **Bewitched** (selection) for soprano and string quartet (2010). **Species Counterpoint** (2019) for baritone saxophone, contralto clarinet and soundtrack.

Following the première of his Piano Trio at a Gloucester Music Society concert in 2016, which was commissioned by our Society in memory of Dr Christopher Wynn Parry, **Adrian Williams** has been commissioned by Gloucester Music Society to write a piece for pianist Maria Marchant as part of its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

There will be a concert of works by **Howard Blake** in St Albans Cathedral on 13 July with the St Albans Bach Choir directed by Andrew Sinclair and the Orchestra of St Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by the composer. Music includes two of his most popular choral works - “Songs of Truth and Glory” and “Benedictus”. There have been a number of performances of Howard’s work recently including four one-act ballets directed and choreographed by Robert North and performed in Germany. Normandy and Stockholm have also featured concerts of his work and his “Agatha Film Suite” will feature in the Harrogate Proms on 22 June.

Cornwall based composer **Graham Lynch** has had compositions performed in USA, Germany, Finland, Ireland and Sweden as well as UK this year with a première of “Selene’s Song” for flute and guitar to take place at the Abbaye de Valcroissant, France on 14 July.

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Please contact the Administrator/Editor with your news at [info@pianotriosociety.org.uk](mailto:info@pianotriosociety.org.uk)

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## Piano Trio Day, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March

We are grateful once again to Chris Brammeld for reviewing the event.

The Gloucestershire Academy of Music was our host for this year's Piano Trio Day, and the excellent facilities there contributed to the success of the day. There were five ensembles from three institutions taking part in the day of masterclasses, and students benefitted from the expert tuition of violinist Michael Bochmann, cellist Nicolas Roberts and pianist John Thwaites. The colleges represented were The Royal College of Music, the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.



**Michael Bochmann with Eumelia Trio from the Royal College of Music**

As always, the standard of musicianship on display from the participating students was extremely high, and it is always a pleasure to see students thrive and enjoy the tutelage of highly experienced musicians. Trio Aphelion from RCM were the first to receive their public masterclass, given by John Thwaites. Their chosen piece was the first movement of Brahms's first Piano Trio, Op. 8. Brahms composed the piece in 1854 (it was premiered in Gdansk in 1855), but Brahms's revision of the piece, was not published until 1891. The piece has the distinction of being homotonal, meaning that the tonic of every movement is B (two movements in the major, two in the minor). This all-male ensemble played with a great deal of poise and maturity. After allowing the ensemble to play the movement through in its entirety, John worked with the players to shape the opening theme, addressing issues of balance along the way. Composers of most of the works which students play whilst learning their craft were in fact writing for an entirely different piano, and the tutors made mention of this several times throughout the day.

Trio Lyra, of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, played the first movement of Beethoven's C minor Piano Trio (Op. 1, No. 3). This technically able ensemble was coached by Nicholas Roberts. Nick again addressed the issue of balance between the instruments, as well as the projection of the sound from the strings. Michael Bochmann appeared in the room at a very opportune moment, and advised violinist Olga Eckert to sit forward in the seat, and distribute more weight onto the feet. Immediately her sound was transformed, and Michael said, "There's your sound!" Nick later pointed out that, when playing in a piano trio, he has to work twice as



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hard to produce the requisite sound as when he plays in a string quartet – an important lesson for any chamber musician.



The Concordia Piano Trio, from RWCMD, left, was coached by John Thwaites in the first movement of Schumann's G minor Piano Trio No. 3 (Op. 110). John Thwaites again guided the young performers expertly through this wonderfully evocative music, with balance of the ensemble again an important consideration. Michael Bochmann tutored the exceptional Eumelia Trio (from RCM) in the first movement from Rebecca Clarke's exquisite Piano Trio of 1921, written when the composer was in her mid-thirties. Michael, who by his own admission did not know the

piece, drew the group's attention to the harmonic patterns that were underpinning the piece, encouraging pianist Mikaela Livadiotis to play out the bass notes in order to teach an audience how to listen to, and hear, the piece.

The final ensemble of the day, the Lingling Trio from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, was playing the first movement of Brahms's C minor Piano Trio (Op. 101). Nick encouraged the players to listen to each other's sound, and worked particularly with cellist Haomiao Cao on the projection of his sound. The day ended with a recital comprising one movement by each participating ensemble. All performers were present to listen to the results of the day's tuition. One of the most important opportunities that a day such as this surely presents is for young players to listen to each other perform, and to listen to the words of wisdom of the tutors.



**Nicholas Roberts with Lingling Trio from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire**

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## News from our Corporate Members.....



It will be a busy end of term for **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** with Open Day on 12 June and a Chamber Music Festival taking place from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June when a number of concerts will take place at lunchtimes and early evenings. This will be followed by an International Piano Festival from 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June when our President **Peter Frankl** (left) will be taking part in the opening Gala concert and **Xizi Zhang**, one of the participants in our recent Piano Trio Day, will give a lunchtime recital. Pascal Nemirovski, Artistic Director of the festival writes:

*We are delighted to invite you to our **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire International Piano Festival** where some of the most celebrated pianists will share their knowledge during four days with 17 exceptional young pianists*

*coming from all over the world. To launch the Festival, we welcome Peter Frankl, Markus Groh, Boris Slutsky along with our young protégé Daniel Lebhardt for the Opening Gala Piano recital. Stephen Hough, Stephen Kovacevich, Margaret Fingerhut, John Thwaites and Pascal Nemirovski will also work with our talented young pianists through classes and Masterclasses which will be running freely Sunday-Tuesday inclusive. Then, most of our Young Artists will play a 30 minutes exciting programme in the Recital Hall. Peter Donohoe and Emma Bloxham (BBC Radio 3 Producer) will listen to everyone and will subsequently invite three young Artists to repeat their programme in the Young Artists' Closing Gala Festival Recital along with Lauren Zhang, BBC Young Artist 2018 who is currently studying at the RBC Junior department. Our festival remains a unique environment for tomorrow's star pianists to hone their musical personalities and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire provides the perfect backdrop for both inspiration and learning.*

**BAPAM** continues with its good work and will be holding a Performing Arts Medicine Day on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June at Institute of Sports Exercise and Health in London**. It is organised by those involved in the **Performing Arts Medicine MSc at UCL** which is run by the Division of Surgery and Interventional Science. Experts closely involved in the sector – including several BAPAM practitioners – will be leading sessions on a wide range of topics from clinical assessment of musician's injury to performance anxiety and hypermobility in dance.

BAPAM relies heavily on the generosity of key funders for delivering specialised services to the performing arts community. They are also equally grateful for many individuals and local groups who also support them through fundraising at events such as concerts and talks so on 15 June there will be a fundraising concert for BAPAM featuring two harpsichords played by **David Hill** and **David Ponsford**. This will take place at the beautiful **Syde Manor, GL53 9PM** in the Cotswolds when the programme will include Bach Trio Sonatas arranged for two harpsichords. This has been organised by BAPAM's Honorary Medical Director Dr Penny Wright.

BAPAM provides free, specialist health support to performing artists and has announced it will be working in partnership with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra by hosting a new, free GP-led and confidential monthly clinic at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall for musicians in the RLPO, as well as other performing arts professionals and students in Liverpool and the North West. It will be led by Dr Marie McKavanagh a performing arts medicine specialist.

**Further details of BAPAM activities at [www.bapam.org.uk](http://www.bapam.org.uk)**

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## News from our Piano Trio members.....

**The Gould Piano Trio** gave their first Wigmore concert with their new cellist, Richard Lester, in May. This was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Plans continue for the Corbridge Chamber Music Festival which takes place from 26 - 28 July. In addition to piano trios by Haydn, Ives, John Casken, Amy Beach and Dvořák, the trio will be joined by other musicians for a wide ranging repertoire. <https://corbridgefestival.co.uk>

**Barbican Piano Trio** hosted another enjoyable Frinton Festival at the end of May. In addition to their trio concerts James Kirby gave a piano recital whilst Robert Max performed all six Bach Cello Suites at a single concert and his son Noah saw his new piece *Vignette* receive its première. There were performances by choirs, visiting artists and the London Chamber Orchestra plus visits to local schools. Scientist Vicky Sanz-Moreno joined Robert Max to explore Cell Biology alongside the musical cells which make up Bach's Cello Suites.

The **Fidelio Trio** continues with its busy schedule with a concert on 17 July at the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre in Taunton, followed on 20 July by a concert of new works developed with Irish Composers Collective. Other concerts take place over the autumn followed by their own Winter Chamber Music Festival at Belvedere House, Dublin from 29 November to 1 December.

**Trio Opal**, winners of our Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition last year, have many exciting dates in their diary including concerts at the Ferrandou Music Festival, France in July. Also in July they will be performing in several concerts at the Lake District Summer Music Festival, and also at Dartington International Summer School with an appearance at the Rye Festival in September.

**Mithras Trio**, second prize winners in the same competition, has been busy winning additional prizes including the Ensemble Category of the Royal Overseas League Competition and the Cavatina Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition. They will be performing at the Purcell Room on 15 July as Kirckman Concert Society Young Artists. The trio will be competing in the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition in September so we wish them every success. We received a request from the Perse School, Cambridge to recommend a young piano trio to give coaching and a concert and the Mithras Trio was delighted to oblige at the event in May. They report that "the kids were very enthusiastic and very musical although they were playing complex repertoire, like Beethoven and Schubert quartets. At the end of the afternoon they were able to capture the essence of these masterpieces." Julia Frape, Head of Strings, sent us this report of the day:

*On a Tuesday in May we had the pleasure of welcoming the Mithras Piano Trio to The Perse School for an afternoon of chamber music coaching followed by a short concert given by the trio and some of our chamber groups. Each trio member coached a hand full of groups throughout the afternoon in separate rooms and wandering from room to room I was struck by their enthusiasm to help the students and impart their knowledge. After a short break an audience of 20 to 30 students and parents were treated to a performance of the first movement of Beethoven's Op 11 in B flat major performed by the Mithras Trio. You could hear a pin drop and as I looked around, our students were engrossed and I'm sure inspired by the beautifully musical playing of the trio. After their performance it was the turn of four of our groups to play whilst the Mithras sat and watched encouragingly. I was assured by the trio that they had enjoyed the experience and our students commented for days on how much they had found the group inspirational. We look forward to inviting them back soon.*

The Mithras Trio studies at the **Guildhall School of Music and Drama** and we have been sent details of the **Chamber Music Festival** there from 5 - 7 July. The festival provides an inspiring selection of chamber music performed by staff as well as students. Further details at [gsmd.ac.uk/chambermusicfestival](http://gsmd.ac.uk/chambermusicfestival) If any members would like to attend we have been offered complimentary tickets, so please contact the Administrator to arrange these at : [info@pianotriosociety.org.uk](mailto:info@pianotriosociety.org.uk)



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## Conway Hall Sunday Concerts



Conway Hall in Red Lion Square is a familiar venue to most of our members and is owned by the Conway Hall Ethical Society. Although the hall opened in 1929 the history behind it goes back much further. The Society began as a dissident congregation in 1787 and had its first premises at Bishopsgate before a new chapel was built in South Place in 1824. The first minister of the congregation was William Johnson Fox in 1817 and it was under his guidance that South Place became the centre of advanced thought and progressive activity. Fox identified himself with popular education and repeal of the Corn Laws and in 1847 he became a Member of Parliament. He also produced a journal which became the forerunner of the present *Ethical Record*. Fox was replaced as minister by Moncure Conway, an American, after whom the Society's present home is named. As early as 1900, plans were drawn up for a new home for the Society but progress was halted by the First World War and the need to fund raise for the project, with building work finally starting in 1928 and the hall opening the following year. The hall was purpose built to host concerts and lectures and became home to the Sunday concert series which had started in the 1880s with the aim of providing "affordable classical music for all" and is the longest-running of its kind in Europe.

We are pleased to be working with Simon Callaghan, the Director of Music, who organises the concerts, and can offer our members a 20% discount on tickets for the following three piano trio concerts by quoting PianoTrio1770 when you book. Full price tickets are £12 in advance or £14 on the door. Website is <https://conwayhall.org.uk> and email [events@conwayhall.org.uk](mailto:events@conwayhall.org.uk) with phone 020 7405 1818.

### Sunday 29 September, 18.30

#### Delta Piano Trio

Gerard Spronk (violin), Irene Enzlin (cello), Vera Kooper (piano)



**Haydn** - Trio in E, Hob.XV28

**Peteris Vasks** - Plainscapes

**John Corigliano** - Fantasia on an Ostinato for piano

**Brahms** - Trio in C minor, Op 101

Founded in 2013 by three Dutch performers, the Delta Piano Trio has won numerous international awards and has a growing discography including works by Shostakovich, Taneyev, Borodin and Russian-American composer, Lera Auerbach. Their programme at Conway Hall flanks cutting-edge twentieth and twenty-first century works for piano trio with German classics.

### Sunday 13 October, 18.30

#### Trio Concertante

Nancy Dahn (violin), Heather Tuach (cello), Timothy Steeves (piano)



**Beethoven** - Trio in D Op 79 no 1

**Shostakovich** - Trio no 2 in E min

**Brahms** - Trio no 1 in B, Op 8

In a rare UK performance, Trio Concertante perform three of the most popular works for piano trio, culminating in the symphonic first trio by Brahms. The eerie-sounding second-movement gave Beethoven's Ghost trio its famous nickname, whilst Shostakovich's second trio, composed during World War Two, combines Jewish melodies and Shostakovich's trademark sardonic humour.

### Sunday 24 November, 18.30

#### Linos Piano Trio

Konrad Elias-Trostman (violin), Vladimir Waltham (cello), Prach Boondiskulchok (piano)



**Beethoven** arr Beethoven -

Symphony no 2 in D, Op 36

**Beethoven** arr Linos Trio - Finale from Symphony no 3 Eroica

**Mendelssohn** - Piano Trio no 1 in D minor, Op 49

**Ravel** - La valse

The Linos Piano Trio returns to Conway Hall with the rarely heard Beethoven transcription of his own 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony, followed by the trio's re-imagining of the variations from the Eroica Symphony. One of the genre's masterworks - Mendelssohn's D minor Trio - is paired with Ravel's haunting La Valse.