

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

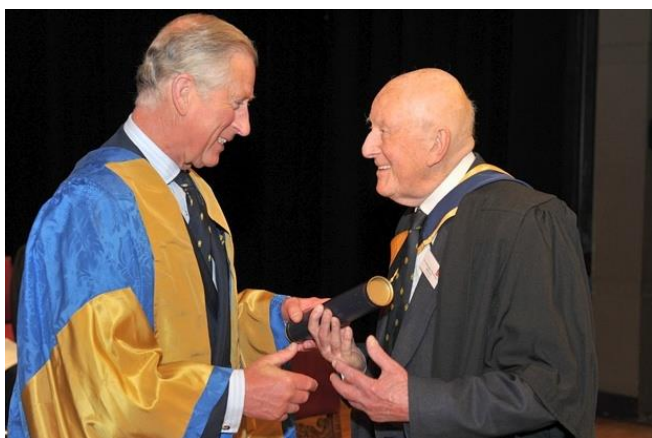


Registered Charity no 1067071

21st Anniversary Concert

Saturday 5 November, 3.00pm

We will be celebrating the 21st anniversary of the Piano Trio Society with a special concert on Saturday 5 November in the historic Chapter House of Gloucester Cathedral. The performers are our members, the Fidelio Trio and their programme includes Moeran's Piano Trio and Stanford's 3rd Piano Trio as well as our newly commissioned work from Adrian Williams, which will be receiving its world première.



The new trio is dedicated to the late Dr Christopher Wynn Parry MBE, seen here with the Prince of Wales, who was committed to the Society from its earliest days, later being made a Vice President. We are grateful to Gloucester Music Society, which will be hosting the event as part of their forthcoming season and from whose website tickets may be obtained. These are £17 with concessions £16. Gloucester is easily reached from London by rail or road so we hope to welcome many of our members at this special occasion.

www.gloucestermusicsociety.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 34 SUMMER 2016

Our New Vice President



We are delighted to announce that pianist and composer Howard Blake OBE has agreed to become a Vice President of our Society. Howard has been a member for many years and has contributed to a number of our events as well as being a keen supporter of the piano trio medium so we offer him a very warm welcome. He has written a number of piano trios and these are available from his website:

www.howardblake.com

In this issue

We review the successful masterclasses with the Barbican Piano Trio at Piano Trio Day on page 4 and those with our President Peter Frankl at Steinway Hall on page 6. We also include news from our members, and feature one of our prize-winning young trio members.

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Piano Trio Profile.....Cygnus Trio



César Saura - piano

Javier Montañana - violin

Hannah Lewis - cello

The Cygnus Trio has twin homes in Valencia and London. In Valencia, Javier Montañana and César Saura initially studied together before enrolling at the Royal Academy of Music, where they respectively studied violin with Richard Deakin, and piano with Daniel Ben-Pienaar and William Fong. In London, Hannah Lewis won a scholarship to continue her cello studies with David Smith at the Royal Academy. In 2012, across both Valencia and London, the three formed the Cygnus Piano Trio and have been playing and travelling together ever since. The trio has received regular coaching from Richard Deakin, Michael Dussek and Nicholas Roberts, as well as having participated in masterclasses with the Trio Owon and the Doric Quartet. As members of the Piano Trio Society, they have played in masterclasses with Raphael Wallfisch, Krzysztof Smietena, Nick Trygstad, Alan Schiller, and Peter Cropper.

Among other London venues, the Trio has performed at St Cyprian's Clarence Gate and St Laurence Upminster. Valencia performances have included concerts in the *Capella de la Sapiencia* at the University of Valencia and at the cultural centre *La Beneficencia*. The Trio was delighted to be invited to play in the International Classical Music Festival in Villanueva de los Infantes, Ciudad Real, Spain, playing there both in 2013 and 2014. The following year, they travelled to Scotland to perform in the Music Coll 2015 (organised by the Tunnell Trust), which offered a wonderful opportunity to interact with and learn from fellow chamber musicians and tutors. In 2015, they also performed at Homerton University Hospital in aid of the Trust's charity, and at the opening of an art exhibition of Antoni Luque's work in Villarreal, Spain.

In 2015, the Cygnus Trio was awarded first prize in the chamber music competition commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Las Provincias newspaper in Valencia. In February this year, they also achieved first prize in the 7th Chamber Music Competition of Alzira, Valencia, where they will be returning in June to give a prize winner's recital. Most recently, they were awarded second prize in the chamber music competition held in the Ecoparque de Tramiera, Arnuero, as a result of which they look forward to playing at the Santander Music Festival on 19th August 2016.

<http://cygnustrio.com>

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Piano Trio People.....

Since our first concert at Burgh House last year, the venue has proved very popular with our members!

Marmara Piano Trio returned to Burgh House on May 22nd, with guest artists Juan Drown (viola) and Guillem Calvo (violin), for an afternoon of chamber music titled 'Do you like Brahms?'. The programme included short pieces by Robert and Clara Schumann, as well as Brahms' Piano Trio Op. 8 and his epic Piano Quintet Op. 34 in F. The trio performed to a full-house, with children sitting around the piano, enjoying a wonderful afternoon in sunny Hampstead. The quintet also featured in a programme at Covent Garden, and the trio has an all-French lunchtime recital coming up on July 14th at St. Olave's in Hart Street which will include Debussy Trio, and Saint-Saens Piano Quartet No.2.

ChamberMusicBox continues with its series of Sunday concerts at Burgh House under the guidance of **Julia Morneweg**, with another concert on 3 July at 2.15pm. Julia writes: "We have been busy filling the programme with some fantastic and incredibly diverse music ranging from a gem of the classical period to some dazzling delights showing off the lightning-quick fingers of our pianists Yulia Chaplina and Kausikan Rajeshkumar."

The Icknield Trio (Arwen Newband, violin, Sarah Boxall, cello and Anna Le Hair, piano) will be performing trios by Haydn and Arensky in the St Lawrence Jewry Summer festival, Gresham Street, London on Wednesday August 2nd at 1 pm. On Sunday September 11th they will be performing trios by Haydn, Brahms and Arensky at St Leonard's Church, Hythe at 3 pm.

After a very successful Piano Trio Festival in October we were sad to learn that **Richard Carruthers** will no longer be arranging the lunchtime concerts at **Notting Hill** churches. These have played a very important part in our programmes for a number of years so we hope very much to be able to make contact with the person who has taken over the organisation so we can continue to offer these to our members. In the meantime we send our thanks and best wishes to Richard.

The **Fidelio Trio** continues with a hectic schedule including this concert as part of the Rhinegold Live series.



FREE RECITAL: THE FIDELIO TRIO

Champions of classical and contemporary alike, the Fidelio Trio perform piano trios by Beethoven and Dvořák, alongside Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*.

19 July 2016 | 7pm recital | Conway Hall, London

Book your FREE ticket

The Trio will also be featuring a touring programme with poet/reader Sinéad Morrissey in a Beyond Borders funded collaboration. Their performance at the Cheltenham Festival on Friday 15 July includes works by Piers Hellawell, Michael Zev Gordon and the première of a trio by 2015 RPS Composition Prize-winner Hunter Coblentz. The poetic sequence of 2014 T S Eliot Prize-winner Morrissey muses on the theme of migration, borders and sanctuary, and develops the poetic transfiguration in Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. The Fidelio Trio also performs in the world première of our newly commissioned trio by Adrian Williams on Saturday 5 November in the Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral at 3.00pm.

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Piano Trio Day



The members of the Barbican Piano Trio were the tutors for our annual Piano Trio Day which took place on Sunday 15 May at Clarendon Muse, Watford. In addition to a local trio from Watford Grammar School for Boys, trios attended from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Music. During the lunch break there was a talk by Christopher Brammell on composing a piano trio.

The day began with welcome and registration at 9.30, with the first masterclass taking place at 10.00. The Iris Trio from RWCMD received coaching from Robert Max on Beethoven's Opus 1 no 3, whilst Trio Soane had a private masterclass with James Kirby. Violinist Simon-Philippe Allard and cellist Benjamin Jones were urged to move their chairs in order to make pianist Melanie Wong more inclusive in the group. They were also asked to make sure their tuning matched and to project the string tone. Melanie was reminded that allowance should be made for the power of a modern piano. After their public masterclass the Iris Trio received a private masterclass with Sophie Lockett.



Birmingham Conservatoire was represented by the Brahms Trio, which offered Brahms Op 8 as their chosen work. Pianist Hannah Slavin, violinist Man Chun Yu and cellist Wayne Chan received coaching from James Kirby. There was much lively discussion on a number of topics, with the trio urged to find the character of the music and also to note the different contours of each crescendo. It was suggested that it would be a useful exercise to practise passages both legato and staccato.

Lunch was at 12 noon when participants brought out their packed lunches and enjoyed an opportunity to mingle with other trios and with the tutors. Jane Faulkner provided hot drinks for all and food for the hard working tutors.

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Christopher Brammeld has been a Piano Trio Society member for many years and we were delighted to recommend the young Bedriska Trio to record his newly written piano trio, so we were interested to know just how Chris set about writing a piano trio. He was interviewed by Christine Talbot-Cooper as well as answering questions from the audience and included audio extracts from his trio, which will receive its première by the Bedriska Trio in the Chapter House, Gloucester Cathedral on Saturday 26 November at 3.00pm.



The afternoon coaching session began with the young Watford Piano Trio who played the first movement of Mendelssohn's Op 49 trio, with Sophie Lockett as the tutor. Alexander Page proved to be a very accomplished pianist and Andrew Lai, violin, and cellist Reuben Gluck received advice on bowing and use of vibrato. Different ways of playing staccato were discussed and the players were asked to observe dynamics. Meanwhile the Brahms Trio met with

Robert Max for a private masterclass before Robert returned to the auditorium for the final public masterclass with Trio Soane - pianist Marzia Hudajarova, violinist Adéla Ševčíková and cellist Corinna Boylan.

Most trios offer the first movement of a work to be studied at our masterclasses so we were very pleased when Trio Soane offered the fourth movement of Beethoven's Op 70 no 2 and were immediately asked to make the movement more exciting by playing it faster! Many points were covered including phrasing, the balance of piano and strings and bow speeds and matching the same style of playing between the instruments. For the final private masterclass the Watford Piano Trio were coached by James Kirby and the day ended with an enjoyable concert by all the participants.



Our thanks go to Jane Faulkner for the huge amount of help she gave with refreshments but also for her help with page turning. Chris Brammeld was hugely helpful setting up the venue and dealing with technical aspects of the day, whilst John Talbot-Cooper was also on hand to assist where necessary. We are grateful to Stephen Hussey, Director of Music at the school, for his help with general arrangements and Ian Scleater and the Lawton Trust whose grant made the event possible.

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Peter Frankl Masterclasses

The Piano Trio Society embarked on a joint event with the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe and ESTA West London when our President, Professor Peter Frankl, was the tutor for two days of masterclasses featuring Beethoven Trios and String Sonatas at Steinway Hall on 16 and 17 May. This was followed by a concert and competition on Wednesday evening 18 May at which the Gwyneth George Award was made to the best ensemble. Alberto Portugheis supervised the event, which was also attended by our committee members. James Obelkevich has sent us his thoughts about the masterclasses he attended:

Peter Frankl, our own President, was the coach, and his musical insight and experience were clearly of great benefit to the young players. As was to be expected, all three duos presented the first movement of their respective sonatas, with only one of the three going on to the later movements. This is of course normal and understandable. But it also is perhaps regrettable. For slow movements – and third (and fourth) movements – raise interpretive issues of their own, are not always well played, and would certainly be played better with expert coaching.



Professor Peter Frankl with the Minerva Piano Trio

Most of Peter Frankl's comments related

to particular phrases or even individual notes or chords, but occasionally he offered some more general counsel. Before starting a slow movement, he advised, 'Prepare your soul'. Wise words before playing any piece at all! The only disappointment was that the audience for the event was so small. Of course music students are busy. But this was a golden opportunity to learn from a master musician, and it's a pity that so few took advantage of it.

With so many participants the concert and competition proved to be a marathon event which is reviewed by Malcom Miller below and with prizes awarded as follows:

First Prize: Louko Piano Trio (RNCM) – Erkki Louko (violin) | Wayne Woo Seok Kwon (cello) Victor Lim (piano)

Second Prize: Amarins Wierdsma (violin) | Edward Liddall (piano) – Guildhall School of Music

Special mention: Jonel Manciu (violin) – Guildhall School Music of Music

The annual competition, held at Steinway Hall on 18 May in conjunction with the Piano Trio Society and EPTA West London, followed two days of masterclasses with the distinguished pianist Peter Frankl, who joined BPSE Vice-Chairman Alberto Portugheis on the Jury for the competition. Nine ensembles participated, each performing a duo sonata or trio of their choice, amounting to a rather extended evening of music making to regale a select Steinway Hall audience.

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Framed by two contrasting accounts of the violin sonata in A Op 30/1, the all-Beethoven programme featured two trios, a cello and piano sonata and six violin piano sonatas. To open with Op 30/1 was the duo of Kamila Bydlowska, violin with Lucy Colquhoun, piano, engaging performance was followed by the particularly impressive Fiesole Piano Trio, who gave a warm hearted, expressive and witty account of the Op 1/3 trio, full of contrasts and fine tonal control. Alexander Kirk's pianism was incisive and polished, while Rosa Hartley, violinist, projected an appealing tone, responsively complemented by cellist Kieren Carter. Next was Sophie Leung, violin with Boya Yang, piano in a propulsive account of the sonata in A minor Op. 23, with the cellos sonata OP 69 to follow. Here Hannah Watson's pianism was noteworthy, always compelling and precise as support to Thomas Marlin's cello, which gained in energy but seemed generally slightly thin in tone. Their drama of the Op 69 cello sonata was capped by the exciting and arresting account of the 'Kreutzer sonata' Op 47 by the violinist Jonel Manciu and Kaoru Wada, piano. This was a reading of large scale work that was full of felicities, clarity and impetus, reaching to the extreme registers with sonorous richness.

After a short interval, the duo of Corinna Hentschel, violin and Giulio Poggia, piano gave a forthright rendition of the power-packed sonata in C minor Op 30/2. It was then the turn of the remarkable young Louko Trio whose uniquely involving account of Beethoven's 'Ghost' trio, Op 70 no.1 enthralled the audience. Certainly the slow movement that gives the piece its name was full of suspense and whispered tension, the chromatic harmonies and subtle rhythms characterised with intensity; the motivic clarity of their first movement was impressive as was the remarkable transition from the slow movement into the exhilarating impetus of the driving finale. The sprightly early sonata OP.12/3 was offered by Akerke Ospan, violin and Tamila Salimdjanova, piano. Yet it was the outstanding violin tone and matched responsiveness in the piano that gave a special aura to the duo of Amarins Wierdsma, violin with Edward Liddall, piano. Their interpretation of the A major sonata Op 30/1 displayed resilient supple tone and interplay between the players that gave this performance the edge.

Introducing the Jury decision, Alberto Portugheis thanked the BPSE guest artist Peter Frankl and emphasised how fortunate the BPSE were to have Peter Frankl as teacher for the masterclasses in



Louko Piano Trio

which everyone had learned so much, and improved their styles. Peter Frankl, in his preamble to awarding the prizes, observed that in some cases the musical personalities were impressive but the task was to judge the ensemble playing. For that reason the first prize was awarded to the Louko Piano Trio, who, he believed, really listened to each other, giving a really enjoyable performance. Second prize went to the Wierdsma/Liddall duo, with special mention for artistry and personality going to Jonel Manciu. Prizes

include cash awards and recitals as part of the BPSE series in London and around the UK, details to be announced on the website **www.bpse.org**

Review © Malcolm Miller

Peter Frankl and Alberto Portugheis prepare to serve wine at the reception following the concert.

We are grateful to Committee Member Bobby Chen who has kindly supplied many of the photographs used in this Newsletter.



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Dame Ethel Smyth – Impressions of An Extraordinary Life

We were interested to hear from the **Galos Piano Trio**, one of our professional trio members, of a new programme they have researched and will be presenting in coming months. Pianist James Longford, violinist Felicity Broome-Skelton together with Heidi Parsons on cello are joined by soprano Sarah Gabriel as they explore the extraordinary life and music of Dame Ethel Smyth.



From the mid to late nineteenth century the German city of Leipzig was a hot house of musical creativity; a melting pot of compositional talent and a centre of musical ideas. Many composers were drawn to this wonderful city, following in the footsteps of J.S.Bach and more recently Felix Mendelssohn, to learn from the great composers, socialise, network, and above all create. Having won a battle of wills with her father (who didn't want her to go), Ethel Smyth arrived to study in Leipzig in 1877 and found that the conservatoire had rather been resting on the laurels of Mendelssohn's legacy and was no longer up to the teaching standards she was expecting; undeterred she found private tuition with Heinrich von Herzogenberg and her mission to become a composer commenced. She was soon absorbed into his circle and met and became friends with the likes of Brahms, Clara Schumann, the Griegs, Tchaikovsky, Kirschner, Mahler, Weber, Joachim, and more. She was immersed in the world of her dreams and certainly made the most of the opportunity.



Further details about the Galos Piano Trio can be found on their website:
www.galos-trio.com