

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 52 SPRING 2022



Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competitions

As life slowly returns to some sort of normality we have two important dates in our diary - 24 April and 3 July.

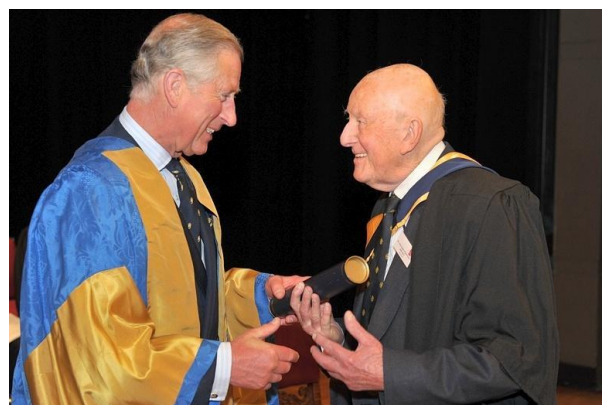
We had an excellent response from the conservatoires for our **Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition** which took place on 24 April in the Henry Wood Room at the Royal Academy of Music in London. We were delighted we were able to secure the services of three outstanding musicians to form the Jury - violinist Anthony Marwood, cellist Raphael Wallfisch and pianist Tom Poster (below). Further details on page 4



The **Junior Competition** will take place at the same venue on 3 July, starting at 2.00pm. As many of the Junior departments have been severely affected by the Covid disruption we are pleased that there will be three entries for this. The distinguished Jury will be Rita Manning (violin), Pal Banda (cello) and the pianist our own Melvyn Cooper.

We are able to welcome a limited number of audience members - a wonderful opportunity to hear the outstanding talent of the next generation! Please let us know if you would like to attend so we can reserve a place for you.

In this issue



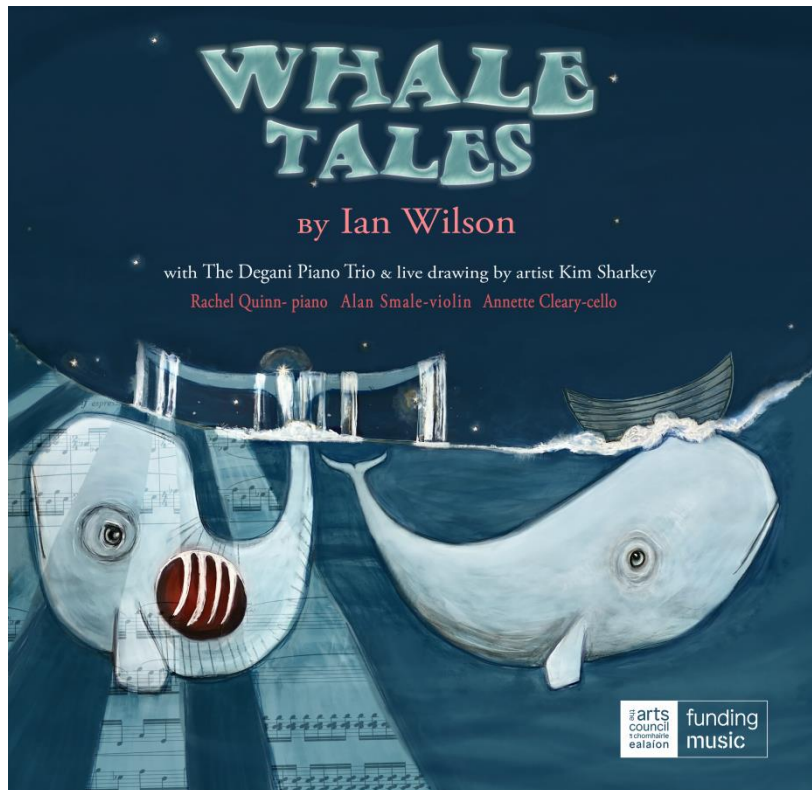
For almost thirty years our Society has focused on Health and the Musician. We have organised many events reflecting this and have included numerous articles in our Newsletter. We have worked with a number of distinguished practitioners, most notably the late Dr Christopher Wynn Parry MBE, seen above with Prince Charles, who was one of our Vice Presidents, and also with BAPAM - the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine. In this issue we focus on the recent month long campaign putting mental health centre stage for early career musicians. This has brought in contributions from BAPAM, YCAT, the Musicians' Union and Help Musicians. Further details on page 6

Our members, including both performers and composers, continue to feature piano trios in their work and we are pleased to include some of their latest news on page 2. If you have articles or news which may be of interest for a future Newsletter please contact the Editor on 01242 620736.

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News from our members

Composer **Ian Wilson** is a keen advocate of the piano trio medium and has written his sixth piano trio. "Whale Tales", is a 20-minute work inspired by various aspects of, or things to do with whales - there is an ecological impulse behind the piece. It consists of a short introduction and four main movements with the titles "Jonah", "The Whale's Tale" (after the eponymous area on the dwarf planet Pluto), "Sleep" (inspired by the vertical position whales sleep in), and "The White Whale" after Melville's novel "Moby Dick".



While the music was not written specifically for children, the Degani Piano Trio (Dublin) gave the first five performances at children friendly family events in March in Letterkenny, Dun Laoghaire, and Westport in Ireland with acclaimed children's artist Kim Sharkey doing live drawing during the performances.

We were pleased to have news from **Pippa Harrison** of the **Albany Trio** which has recently been joined by a new violinist, **Judith Choi-Castro** after Gemma Sharples, one of the founder members left due to an increase of performing work and family commitments.

The trio continues with a busy schedule including concerts for Redbridge Music Society on 7th June, the East Devon Music Festival on 18th June, Bury St Edmund's Concert Series on 21st November and Fundación Nino Díaz Festival in Lanzarote (a concert to specially feature music for piano trio written on the Canary Islands) on 3rd September.

Pippa Harrison has also been appointed as the EPTA representative for the Gloucester region.

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The pandemic is not the only factor disrupting performances! Sadly the first performance of a new trio "Towards the Light" by composer **John Carmichael**, scheduled for 18 February, was delayed due to storm Eunice sweeping through the south. It brought down the power lines in Sussex and the concert hall lost power. The performers, already in situ, just had to return home! However, the trio was recently recorded by **Primavera** at the Yehudi Menuhin Hall with the premiere now taking place as part of the Deal Festival on 11 July at St Georges Church in Deal alongside trios by Ravel and Schubert.

The **Paddington Trio** clinched the top prize with a nuanced and powerful performance of Shostakovich in the hotly contested first ensemble final for the 70th year of the Royal Overseas League Competition Annual Music Competition. The Paddington Trio are currently students of the Advanced Chamber Music Programme at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and were awarded second prize in our Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition on 24 April.



Robert Max, one of our Vice Presidents, will be performing again at the Frinton Festival of Music, where he is Artistic Director, and which takes place from Thursday 26 to Sunday 29 May. He will conduct the Festival Orchestra in a programme of Johann Strauss, Mendelssohn and Brahms with solo violinist Mathilde Milwidsky and will also appear as cellist with the Barbican Piano Trio which will perform trios by Beethoven, Martinu and Brahms.

www.frintonfestival.com

The members of the **Gould Piano Trio** meanwhile continue as Artistic Directors of the Corbridge Chamber Music Festival which this year takes place between 28th and 31st July. They will be joined by clarinettist Robert Plane, the Elias String Quartet and Roberto Carrillo-Garcia on double bass. Composer in residence will be Piers Hallawell with Sinéad Morrissey as poet and narrator. <https://corbridgefestival.co.uk>

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society, which was held on 25 February via Zoom we were sorry to bid farewell to **Dr James Obelkevich** following a lengthy period as a Trustee. He was thanked for his work and support over many years and we are pleased to hear that he will maintain his membership of the Society.

The remaining Trustees were re-elected as follows:

Chairman: Jane Faulkner, Administrator - Christine Talbot-Cooper

Committee - Melvyn Cooper, Dr Christopher Brammell, Bobby Chen and Dr Mary Dullea. Yvonne Cheng will also assist with administrative matters.

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition



Winners - Hamie Blachuta Trio

It was with a welcome sense of normality I entered the Royal Academy of Music on Sunday April 24th to listen to the trios entered for the intercollegiate competition. This competition was originally set to take place in 2020, then hoped for in 2021, but it was this spring before we could confidently set the wheels in motion.

The competition was held in the Sir Henry Wood Room at the RAM, a good sized recital room. We were privileged to have three very distinguished jurors – cellist Raphael Wallfisch, violinist Anthony Marwood and pianist Tom Poster. Prizes were presented by our Vice President renowned pianist and composer Howard Blake OBE, FRAM.

It was a long day as there were representatives from six conservatoires:

Royal Academy of Music – Cobalt Trio

Trinity Laban Conservatoire – Kelilecca Trio

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire – New Elements Trio

Royal Northern College of Music – Aurelia Trio

Royal College of Music – Hamie Blachuta Trio

Guildhall School of Music – Paddington Trio (below)



Each group was allowed a playing time of 35 minutes in which to present a varied programme from an extensive repertoire list set by the Piano Trio Society. This repertoire list deliberately included many lesser known works, as the trio repertoire is very rich and varied, and worth exploring. The audience was treated to a wealth of music, with only

one work repeated - Mendelssohn's C minor trio, which was chosen by two trios. Other composers featured were Beethoven, Brahms, Rebecca Clarke, Debussy, David Matthews,

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Mozart, Shostakovich, Smetana and Judith Weir. In addition the trios had a set work to perform. This was a five minute piece “La musique - Five Variants” by the Piano Trio Society’s trustee and composer Dr Christopher Brammeld. A set work is always an interesting part of a competition. This excellent piece required control, particularly from the strings, and was a test in projection of the different and fast changing moods and tempi. It is not an easy piece to perform although every trio did it justice.

There was a good audience throughout the day, and many of the trios listened to each other’s performances. As a member of the audience I can say that there were no poor performances, and every trio should have felt a sense of achievement. These players are all young professionals who will continue to grow musically and technically. However, a competition has to have winners, so the jury conferred for a short while before announcing the placings.



New Elements Trio

Chairman of the jury, Raphael Wallfisch, gave an overview of the day, explaining the criteria used for making the decisions. Balance within the trios, blend of sound and musical interpretation were crucial. The result was:



First prize of £900 – Hamie Blachuta Trio (Royal College of Music)

Second prize of £450 – Paddington Trio (Guildhall School of Music)

Third prize of £300 – New Elements Trio (Royal Birmingham Conservatoire)

The certificates were presented by our Vice President and distinguished composer Howard Blake OBE, FRAM

Afterwards the three jurors met informally with the participating trios to discuss their performances. The trios were very keen to hear comments and it was a very productive end to the day. In fact it could have gone on for a very long time but we had to finish by 6pm!

It was an extremely enjoyable occasion, and it was heartening to see that piano trio ensembles are playing to an exceptionally high standard. © Jane Faulkner 2022

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Mental Health for Early Career Musicians

Our Society has long been interested in the physical and mental health of our young musicians and has featured this in workshops and talks as well as Newsletter articles for many years. We were interested therefore to hear that the month of April was dedicated to this subject and involved Young Concert Artists Trust, Musicians' Union, Help Musicians and of course BAPAM - British Association for Performing Arts Medicine. There was a wide variety of events and resources all of which were free of charge.

The project manager, Dr Kate Blackstone, pictured left, wrote



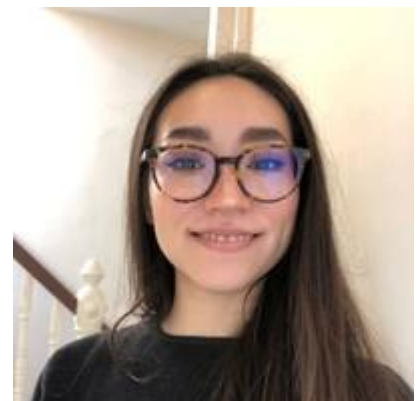
"Early career musicians can often feel like their only sources of mental health advice are their tutors, or other musicians. That's why we are offering mental health support from qualified and experienced practitioners. I really hope that this can be the beginning of musicians' journeys into maintaining their mental health in a manageable and positive way."

Events included meditation sessions with Alison Gordon, a dedicated mental health and conscious breathing workshop by BAPAM GP Dr Pippa Wheble and 1-2-1 coaching sessions with Marion Friend MBE.

At present the Musicians' Union offers support to musicians of all genres, specifically catering to those earlier in their career through the publication of the "Young Freelancer's Guide to Mental health in the Music Industry". This can also be downloaded for non-members.

Their Education and Equalities Office, Rose Delcour-Min explained:

"Access to health and wellbeing resources are crucial for the longevity of musicians' careers. We want a culture change where musicians feel empowered to ask for help before reaching crisis point. We're proud to be working with YCAT and BAPAM, and we hope to continue to deliver on this for our members."



The tagline for the campaign was "Don't wait till crisis point". This was because taking preventive measures by developing healthy mental wellbeing habits has been shown to improve mental health outcomes for musicians further down the line. Indeed Joe Hastings, Head of Music Minds matter at Help Musicians mentioned the importance of helping musicians to develop healthy habits early in their careers:

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“The early part of a musician’s career can be an exciting time, but it can also present significant challenges. Through the insights that we have gathered via our Music Minds Matter service, we understand the importance of prioritising self-care to build and maintain emotional wellbeing and to promote happy and healthy careers. We are really excited to be working with YCAT, BAPAM and the Musicians’ Union on this important campaign.”



By joining forces with industry leaders to create an exciting campaign it was hoped it would help musicians become more confident in their knowledge of where to find assistance. This was considered of special important given the impact of pandemic restrictions, as Phoebe Butler, Training Assistant at BAPAM explained:

“Sadly 70-75% of musicians will experience a mental health problem, and this is on the increase since COVID-19. Building healthy practice at an early stage will help reduce mental health problems and we are delighted to be working with YCAT on this important project”



Marion Friend MBE



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PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

New Trio Publication for Students

We are always pleased to hear of new publications relating to piano trios and were interested to hear of the recent Alfred publications by **Nancy Litten** which have been reviewed for us by Melvyn Cooper.

CLASSICAL VIENNA-Well Loved Solos Arranged for Piano Trio. Grades 6-7 Early-Advanced/Advanced

ISBN 10: 1470613530 9 781470 613532 ISBN 10: 1470613638 9 781470 613631

HAYDN. She never told her love- Canzonetta -Finale-Piano Sonata in D Hob XVI 37

MOZART. Rondo- Piano Sonata in C K545 - Alla Turca – Piano Sonata in A K331

BEETHOVEN. Moonlight Sonata in C# Minor Op 27 No 2-Adagio Sostenuto

Pathetique Sonata in C Minor Op 13-Adagio - Tempo di Menuetto-Piano Sonata in G op 49 No 2

ROMANTIC VIENNA-Well Loved Solos Arranged for Piano Trio. Grades 6-8Advanced/Late Advanced

ISBN 10. 1-4 706 1363-8 ISBN 13. 978-1-4706 -1. 363-1

SCHUBERT. Who is Sylvia Op 106 No4 D891

A selection of Schubert Waltzes-Waltz, Op 9a in Ab, Op 9a No 16 in A 'Spring Air', Landler Op 171 No 3 in D Caprice, Valse Noble Op 77 No9 in A Minor

JOHANN STRAUSS II. On the Beautiful Blue Danube Op 314

BRUCKNER. Fantasie WAB 118

BRAHMS. Ballade Op 118 No 3 - Intermezzo Op 76 No 7

These two volumes of pieces have been arranged for Piano Trio of Piano, Violin and Cello by Nancy Litten, herself a professional pianist, teacher and violinist. Those piano trio Ensembles who may not be professional but enthusiastic amateurs will find these arrangements extremely inviting. Their beauty lies in the equalising of the instruments as regards technical difficulty. Many wonderful 'Professional Piano Trios' in the repertoire sometimes have one instrument, usually the piano, of greater technical difficulty than the other two instruments. Nancy Litten has brought to the repertoire much needed and approachable classical and romantic works. The volumes are elegantly and beautifully published by Alfred Publishing and come complete with separate parts for Piano, Violin and Cello. Nancy has graded the books for ease of use by trios and chamber music teachers. All the pieces are suitable for competitions, competitive and non-competitive festivals, chamber concerts, general concerts and even encores. As teaching repertoire they enable trios to concentrate on ensemble work rather than each player struggling individually with instrumental technique. There is plenty of variety of style, mood, requirements for performance or just playing for personal pleasure and enjoyment. I fully recommend these excellent publications.

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