

# PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 55 FEBRUARY 2023

### Success for Competition winners

Following their success in winning First Prize in our Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio competition last year, we congratulate the members of the Astatine Trio which has gone on to other successes.



In July 2022 the trio won First Prize and Luigi Boccherini Prize of the International Virtuoso and Belcanto Chamber Competition held in Lucca, Italy. Most recently the trio was joint First Prize winner of the Birmingham International Piano Chamber Music Competition in November 2022.

### Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Sunday 12 February at 4.00pm via Zoom, Please contact the Administrator if you wish to take part and we will send you the necessary log-in details.

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

### In this issue



### Piano Trio Day 2023

We continue our work with students and will be holding our popular Piano Trio Day on Sunday 5 March at Clarendon Muse Watford. Tutors will be Michael Bochmann MBE, (above) Nicholas Roberts and James Kirby. Details on page 4.

### Dr Christopher Brammell



We will be sorry to say farewell to Trustee Dr Christopher Brammell who has now taken on the demanding post of Head of Instrumental Music at Caterham School. We thank him for his many years of active support of our Society and wish him well in his new post.

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## Book launch of “Past Sounds” - a review of the event by Jane Faulkner

The Piano Trio Society was delighted to co-host the ‘Talk – Recital’ given by author Gillian Perrin introducing her new book **PAST SOUNDS: *Sonata Idea in the Piano Trio***

This project was many years in the making for Gillian Perrin, and she had been in close touch with the Piano Trio Society for the last few years. Her enthusiasm and passion for exploring the development of sonata form

and its continued presence through the romantic period and into more recent years is brought to the fore in this admirable book. With many examples of piano trio compositions, heard on easily navigated audio clips, it is highly readable, and very attractively presented with illustrations of art and architecture of the relevant periods. It is suitable for any person interested in music and the arts.

The event was held in the David Josefowitz Recital Hall at the Royal Academy of Music on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The recital hall was filled and a diverse selection of musicians – performers, composers, academics and interested amateurs were present. The atmosphere was positive, friendly and buzzing.



On behalf of the Piano Trio Society I gave an opening welcome and introduction to the evening, before handing over to Gillian. Gillian’s talk was complemented by excellent performances from the Astatine Trio, pictured here. Formed at the Royal College of Music in 2021, the Astatine Trio was awarded First Prize at our 2022 Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Society Competition. It was therefore fitting that this talented ensemble provided the musical contributions. Gillian divided her talk into four sections, each ending with an associated piano trio movement:

1. *In the Beginning: The Fortepiano Sonata with Accompaniments*

JC Bach, Sonata in C op 15 no 1, 1<sup>st</sup> movement

2. *The Classical Fortepiano Trio*

Mozart, Trio in C K.458, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement

3. *Out of the Salon and into the Concert Hall*

Beethoven, Trio in D op 70 no 1, ‘Ghost’, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement

4. *The Piano Trio after Beethoven*

Brahms, Trio in B op 8, 1<sup>st</sup> movement

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Following this fascinating and engaging talk with outstanding musical performances, Dr Chris Brammeld, committee member of the Piano Trio Society, gave some words in conclusion (see right) and thanked all involved. There was then an opportunity to purchase copies of the books, signed by Gillian, and to enjoy some refreshments.



It was a sign of the success of the evening that not only did Gillian part with an enormous number of her books, but many guests stayed to the last minute before we had to vacate the recital room! This was a unique event and the Piano Trio Society was extremely glad and proud to be involved in its presentation.

Past Sounds is published by Austin Macauley Publishers and is available on [Austinmacauley.com](https://www.austinmacauley.com), Amazon and all major booksellers.

For more information, please visit <https://www.austinmacauley.com/book/past-sounds>  
Past Sounds Gillian Perrin Paperback £25.99 9781528991599 eBook £ 3.50 9781528991612  
Hardback £ 31.99 978152899160

## A joint celebration

The Piano Trio Society is delighted to have been asked to share the forthcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe (BPSE). We can confirm the following arrangements but more details will be announced in future Newsletters.

The event takes place from 11.00am on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October in the David Josefowitz Hall at the Royal Academy of Music where the complete Beethoven piano trios will be performed during the day. The proposed programme will include a talk by the renowned broadcaster David Owen Norris and will feature three distinguished piano trios:

1. Fidelio Piano Trio performs op 1 no 1 in Eb Major, op 70 in D Major (Ghost) and op 97 in Bb Major (Archduke).
2. The Lisney Piano Trio performs op 11 in Bb Major and op 1 no 3 in C Minor.
3. The Piano Trio of London performs op 1 no 2 in G Major, op 70 no 2 in Eb Major, and 'Allegretto.'

Our Society and the BPSE are reciprocal Corporate Members. The BPSE felt it was time for a break from the piano sonatas which they performed complete in 2021 in London by 32 pianists, culminating with Julian Jacobson's marathon of a performance of all the sonatas from memory in one day in November 2022. These magnificent works along with the Cello Sonatas, Violin Sonatas and String Quartets form a significant body of repertoire of Beethoven's chamber music for piano and strings.

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## Piano Trio Day 2023

We return to Clarendon Muse, Watford on Sunday 5 March from 10.00am for our Piano Trio Day this year. This venue, which is part of Watford's Grammar School for Boys, has hosted many of our events and is an excellent option as it has good transport links. Please join us for all or part of the day - admission for audience members is free! We have managed to secure the services of three of our most popular tutors:

### Professor Michael Bochmann MBE



Michael is a violinist and music education entrepreneur. In 2019 in addition to his many performances he headed a music project in Iraq with the Yazidi people and through Water City Music headed a children's music festival at the Tower of London. He is committed to music diversity in all its forms. Since the early 1970s, Michael has made a significant contribution to the world of classical music through performances, media and education and this has included working with the Piano Trio Society on a number of occasions. In recognition of his services to music, he was awarded an MBE in the 2015 Queen's Birthday honours list.

### Nicholas Roberts



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Nicholas Roberts has been a popular tutor at several of our Piano Trio Days. His performing career encompasses orchestral work, commercial recording, solo work and chamber music, which has played a large part in his career and has included recordings with the Bernard Roberts Trio and also with the Coull Quartet. Nick is also a founding member of Polyphonia, a charity which creates bridges between professional musicians with knowledge of music from the Americas, and young performers playing together in workshops and concerts; guiding and introducing a new generation to this repertoire.

## James Kirby



James has been a member of the Barbican Piano Trio since 1992, performing regularly at Wigmore Hall and in major UK festivals and concert series, and throughout Europe and the USA. He is a dedicated teacher and enjoys posts at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff and Royal Holloway, University of London. He is also an Honorary Professor at the Rachmaninov Institute, Tambov, Russia where he makes frequent visits to perform concertos, give recitals and masterclasses and lead chamber music courses. He has served on the juries of several international piano competitions, and is in considerable demand as an adjudicator.

## Trio Kanon at Conway Hall

Formed a decade ago in Italy, Trio Kanon have won numerous awards and have played all over Europe. In a rare London appearance, they perform three popular trios: Beethoven's E flat trio, companion to the 'Ghost', Shostakovich's C minor trio (composed when he was just 16 years old), and Dvořák's epic third trio, composed in 1883 and possessing a truly Brahmsian flavour.

Beethoven - Trio in E $\flat$  op 70 no 2 (1808)

Shostakovich - Trio No 1 in C minor op 8 (1923)

- interval -

Dvořák - Trio No 3 in F minor op 65 (1883)

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

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## Artistic Temperaments Festival



### David Owen Norris

David Owen Norris is one of our Vice Presidents who is well known for his wide-ranging interests. Our pianist members in particular will be interested to hear of the following event in which he is involved. The Artistic Temperaments Festival takes place from Friday 17<sup>th</sup> - Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February.

**Most of the piano music we love best, we've never heard as its composer heard it.**

Turner Sims, in association with the University of Southampton Music Department, presents a new four-day festival. *Artistic Temperaments* celebrates music performances on beautiful antique instruments and showcases the Department's remarkable collection of keyboard instruments, from the 1770s to the present day. In addition to recitals and talks there is also an opportunity to play these historic instruments.

#### What's the Festival about?

When is a G-sharp not a G-sharp? When it's an A-flat!

As pianists know, sharps and flats have to share the black keys on the piano keyboard, but they are actually different notes. Over the years, that dilemma has led to many different ways of tuning pianos. The compromise we use now, (equal temperament), was not established until after the time of Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin. Before that, pianists preferred bolder compromises.

The Artistic Temperaments Festival gives us the opportunity to hear what we've been missing. The University's great collection of keyboard instruments – including one of their fine modern grands – will be tuned historically. Their Steinway will remain in the modern tuning so we can compare.

The Festival allows us to follow the clues to the hidden secret: that both composers were tuning their pianos in a special way that Haydn – Beethoven's teacher, Schubert's idol – brought back to Vienna from Rosetta Stone, discovered how we see in colour with 'rods and cones', and devised his trips to London in the 1790s. Mingling there with the great

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scientists, Haydn came across the ‘temperament’ devised by Thomas Young. Young was the man who helped translate the Young’s Modulus, which still keeps bridges from falling down today. Unlike the way we tune pianos today, Young’s semitones were of slightly different sizes. David Owen Norris tunes his Viennese Schantz piano of 1802 in this temperament, and you will be amazed at the difference.

Beethoven’s final trio was one of the last pieces he performed as a pianist, in 1814, after which his hearing became too unreliable. He subsequently composed five more solo piano sonatas – not to mention string quartets and symphonies – but no more trios. This suggests that he regarded the piano trio particularly as a genre for himself. On 26 March 1828, the anniversary of Beethoven’s death, Schubert gave, for the only time in his career, a public concert of his own works, and included one of his piano trios. Both his mature piano trios date from the last year of his life. As so often, we can only imagine what he might have done, if only...

The important thing about historical tunings is that the different keys – D major, A minor, and so on – all sound different from one another. There was actually a reason for the weird chromatic semitones in Haydn’s last sonata; a reason for Beethoven choosing C minor for one sonata and C-sharp minor for another; even a reason for Schubert’s beloved G-flat Impromptu first being published in the key of G. It’s a question of harmonic flavour, like using the right herbs and spices.

The collection at the University of Southampton includes the following instruments:

Beyer Square Pianoforte – 1774 and Beyer Square Pianoforte – 1781  
Ganer Square Pianoforte – 1781  
Broadwood Grand Pianoforte – 1796  
Schantz Grand Pianoforte – 1802  
Freckler Grand Pianoforte – 1812  
Broadwood Grand Pianoforte – 1826  
Hopkinson Yacht Piano – 1880  
Goble harpsichord – modern  
Misina-Taskin two-manual Harpsichord – modern  
Fazioli Grand Piano – modern  
Steinway Grand Piano – modern

On Saturday 18 February David will be joined at 10am by Matthew Wright in a talk entitled “New Sounds for Old”; then later in the day he will be performing works by Beethoven and Schubert on his Viennese Schantz piano of 1802. At 3.00p-m on the same day Professor John Thwaites, Head of Keyboard at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, will be giving a Chopin and Liszt recital.

**With thanks to David Owen Norris for this information**

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## Benslow Music



We have featured Benslow Music in previous Newsletters and we are pleased to include information on some forthcoming courses which may be of interest to our amateur and student members.

Benslow Music is a unique charity in the heart of Hitchin that welcomes musicians of all ages and abilities to develop and express their creativity, whilst making lifelong friends and international connections. Whether your music taste is for classical, jazz, pop or folk there is something for everyone. There are 10 designated rehearsal rooms, two recital halls and four acres of stunning gardens.

Below are some of the upcoming courses and concerts:

### **Chamber Music/Piano Courses**

- Intermediate Piano 20- 22 February :
- French Piano Music 6-8 March
- Free Up Your Playing 20 – 22 March :
- Piano Sightreading 17-19 April
- Beyond the Score 5-7 May
- Enigma14 at Benslow 5-7 May: Jazz Piano 2- 4 June: Romantic Piano 23-26 June:
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### **Piano/Chamber Courses**

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- Maggini Quartet 10 February, 8pm
- Jaidon Elliott (Violin) and Stephen Meakins (Piano), 13 February, 3pm
- Quo Vadis: Where Are You Going? Nigel Clayton and Imma Setiadi Piano Duets, 17 - February, 8pm
- Marco Marconi (Jazz Piano) and Mark Wade (Double Bass), 20 February, 8pm:
- Jakob Lindberg (Lute), 10 March, 8pm
- Fitzwilliam String Quartet, 24 March, 8pm
- James McBeth (Cello) and the Lowry Trio, 17 April, 3pm  
Pupils from the Purcell School, 8 May, 3pm

**More information: <https://benslowmusic.org/index.asp?PageID=11>**