

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competitions

We are delighted to report that our first Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition featuring trios from the Junior Colleges and Music Schools proved to be a great success. This took place on Sunday 4 February in the Organ Studio (below) at the new Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, which proved to be an excellent venue. The standard of all the trios was exceptionally high, especially considering the limited amount of rehearsal time available at the Junior Colleges and congratulations are due to the performers and their teachers. A report of the day can be found on page 2 .



We are now preparing for the Senior Competition which will take place on Sunday 29 April. This has attracted an excellent response with all the Conservatoires represented - eight trios in all. The day will start at 10.30 and end at 17.45 after the presentation of the prizes and comments from the Jury. Violinist Professor Michael Bochmann MBE, will be joined by cellist Professor Robert Max and pianist Professor Benjamin Frith on the Jury and each trio will perform a test piece which has been specially written by Chris Brammell. We are grateful to Philip Carne who is generously sponsoring the cash prizes and will be joining us to present them. If you would like to come along and support the trios you will be most welcome and there is no charge. Further details of the day can be found on page 8.

Chamber Music with Piano for Early Learners of all ages



We are planning an autumn event which will take place on Sunday 21 October at Clarendon Muse, Watford in which we explore chamber music with piano suitable for early learners. This will feature two of our members who have long experience in the subject. Pianist Nadia Lasserson has often been asked to find suitable repertoire by her students and has compiled a useful book on the subject. Heleen Verleur (above with her students) is from Amsterdam and has written a number of books featuring her compositions for piano trios. Both will be speaking at the conference. Further details to follow but please keep the date free!

Festivals

Many of our members not only have busy performing careers but also have their own festivals in various parts of the country. In this issue we look at the work they are doing, bringing many innovative ideas as they reach out to local communities. Below the Staffordshire moorlands - home of the Penkhull Festival. Report on page 6.



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Junior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition

Since it was founded, the Piano Trio Society has made educational work one of its priorities. This has taken different forms, but students have particularly appreciated our annual Piano Trio Days, where trios have received coaching from distinguished teachers. This involved working with Colleges, Conservatoires and Academies around the country but did not include the sterling work done by the Junior Departments. When the decision was taken to hold an Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition, we had an opportunity to remedy this and so we held the very first piano trio competition for students from the Junior Colleges and Music Schools at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire on Sunday 4 February. There follows a report by Chris Brammeld on this hugely successful day.



The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire was the inspiring setting for the inaugural Junior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition. Officially opened on 11 March by HRH Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex KG GCV, the brand new £57m facility was granted a Royal title by Her Majesty the Queen in September 2017. That this important event has been brought into being in such a prestigious institution is a major coup for the Piano Trio Society. Added to this, our entrants were

treated to adjudication by three outstanding musicians and teachers: violinist Richard Deakin, cellist Jo Cole, and pianist James Kirby.

And the entrants to the Junior section certainly did the occasion justice. The level was extraordinary, and the ensemble from the Junior Royal College of Music set the bar high with their performances of Mendelssohn (Op. 49, second movement) and Bridge (the Phantasie Trio in C minor). These young musicians (they were all young – which was sometimes easy to forget throughout the day owing to the maturity with which they played) gave an exhilarating account of both works, and an assured



performance of the specially composed test piece (my second Piano Trio). **Above The Jury listen attentively as Chris Brammeld sums up the event before presenting the prizes.**

The “home team”, from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, gave a highly convincing and stylistic account of the fourth movement of Dvorak’s Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65 and the third of Shostakovich’s E minor work, Op. 67. Following them, the Trio from the Junior Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance also played the Mendelssohn D

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minor (but this time the first movement), pairing it with the beautiful second movement of Moeran's Trio in D major, of which they gave a convincing and mature account. After a much-needed lunch break, the Trio from the Menuhin School played the first and second movements of Ravel's ravishing Piano Trio in A minor, the musical language of which they appeared perfectly at home. Indeed, their name, Pantoum, is the subtitle of the second movement of Ravel's piece. (The name refers to a Malaysian verse form, and musicologist Brian Newbold has suggested that the poetic form is reflected in the way that the movement's two themes develop in alteration.) They also played all movements except the first of Brahms's C minor Trio, Op. 101.

Next to perform was the Trio from the Junior Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, who played Shostakovich's Piano Trio in C major, Op. 8, coupled with the first movement of Haydn's C major Trio, Hob XV:27. The Trio from the Junior Royal Northern College of Music rounded off the day's proceedings, playing the first movement of Mozart's G major Trio, K. 496, and the third movement of Brahms's Op. 8 B major Trio, a brave choice, and of which they gave a mature account.



1st Prize Winners - Menuhin School



3rd Prize Winners - Junior Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



2nd Prize Winners - Junior Royal College of Music

It was interesting to note throughout the day that each group had given careful consideration to their programme, and the test piece was placed in every conceivable place. That each ensemble had to prepare a piece which was guaranteed to be new to them all gave all the musicians extra levels of challenge: how to interpret dynamics and strange tempo and mood indications, how to interpret the piece and present it in a meaningful way, how to cope without some of the usual cues such as perfect cadences and traditional modulations? The adjudicators were careful to give much detailed feedback about the renditions of this piece, and James Kirby reminded the musicians that "the composer is always the most important person in the room". I would tend to agree!

As with any such competition, the comments from the judging panel form a highly valuable part. Each adjudicator spoke with great encouragement, while also giving specific comments about particular aspects of each ensemble's playing. Congratulations go to the Pantoum Trio from the Menuhin School, who took the first prize, the Wynn Parry Prize, named in memory of Dr Christopher (Kit) Wynn Parry. Congratulations also to the Junior RCM ensemble (second prize) and Junior Royal Birmingham Conservatoire ensemble (third prize).

The Senior section of the competition takes place in the same venue, on Sunday 29 April.

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Piano Trio Members and their Festivals

20th Corbridge Chamber Music Festival - 3rd to 5th August 2018



Festival Directors the **Gould Piano Trio** and clarinetist Robert Plane are delighted to present the twentieth edition of their much-loved festival in Corbridge, Northumberland. To mark this significant milestone the festival has commissioned the acclaimed composer Huw Watkins to compose a new work especially for the Goulds and Robert. Huw is also joining the festival as pianist as well as Composer-in-Residence. The festival takes place in St Andrew's Church, Corbridge which is on the doorstep of Hadrian's Wall country.

This year's programme is packed with classics, in particular a survey of three of Brahms' mightiest chamber works. Tenor James Gilchrist and Benjamin Frith will perform Schumann's *Dichterliebe* song cycle and there will be concerts throughout the day with music to please all tastes. There is a concert featuring toe-tapping repertoire from South America and an opportunity to come and sing Fauré's Requiem under the guidance of Martin Neary. *Dialogue de l'ombre double* by Pierre Boulez with its live electronics and amplified surround sound is a rare experience not to be missed!

The opening concert is at 6pm and features music by Mozart, Francaix and Brahms with a Tango concert at 9.30pm. The first concert on Saturday 4 August is at 11am then the Come and Sing Requiem takes place at 2.00pm. The concert at 7.30pm is entitled *Autumn Leaves* and includes music by Poulenc, Watkins, Vaughan Williams and Brahms and this is followed by *Late Night Shadows* with music by Boulez, Watkins and Schoenberg. The Festival Service on Sunday 5 August includes music by Mozart and Parry. There is a concert at 3.30pm entitled *Master and Pupil* with music by Ravel and Vaughan Williams with the Festival Finale at 7.30pm which includes the new Watkins work plus music by Mozart and Brahms.

St Andrew's Church, Corbridge

**For further information about the festival
please consult the website**

www.corbridgefestival.co.uk



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Frinton Festival - 25th - 28th May 2018

The Barbican Piano Trio returns to Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, for another festival which brings a weekend of beautiful music performed in local venues. The festival starts in dramatic fashion with the world première of *"The Remarkable Tale of Prince Unexpected"*. The Barbican Trio perform in this magical musical story which is written and narrated by Kevin Graal and features music by Joseph Phibbs. This is a free family concert which takes place in St Mary's Parish Church at 4.15pm and is followed by tea and cakes for the whole audience!



Joseph Phibbs



Kevin Graal



Barbican Piano Trio

Voysey's "Homestead" is the venue for the piano recital by James Kirby at 11am on 26th May which includes music by Melanie Daiken and Schubert. The evening concert entitled *String Quartets across the fields* takes place in All Saints' Church, Great Holland with music by Bach, Schumann and Schubert played by Maria Wloszczowska, Tim Crawford, Adam Newman and Robert Max.

Sunday 27th May sees the Barbican Piano Trio performing music by Schumann and Schubert plus a world première of a new work by Joseph Phibbs. This takes place at Voysey's "Homestead" at 2.15pm. Frinton Festival Evensong takes place at 6.30pm at St Mary's Parish Church and includes music by Schubert, Rutter, Stanford and Schumann.

The festival concludes on Monday 28 May at 6.30pm with *The Massive Violins* in which seven cellists perform epic arrangements of hit songs by Michael Jackson, Clean Bandit, Queen *etc* at Frinton-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club preceded by free wine tasting for ticket holders at 5.30pm.

Further details from the website: **www.frintonfestival.com**

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Penkhull Festival of Music and Art



Chris Brammeld (left) has been appointed as the new Artistic Director of the Penkhull Festival of Music and Art in Staffordshire. Established in 1966, Penkhull Festival is an innovative annual event which takes place in Stoke-on-Trent each September. The festival's home is the historic Domesday village of Penkhull, surrounded by the rolling countryside of the Staffordshire moorlands. St Thomas's Church in Penkhull (below) is the venue for the concerts, and also hosts some of the art exhibitions, as does the Village Hall, where singing workshops for local schoolchildren are also held.



The programme for the 2018 festival is, as ever, a wonderfully eclectic mix of music old and new. Performing artists include the renowned Equinox Saxophone Ensemble, whose director Alistair Parnell is a leading proponent of the Electronic Wind Instrument. Rising baritone star Thomas Isherwood - who among other successes, sung with Bryn Terfel in Grange Park's acclaimed 2015 production of *Fiddler on the Roof* - will present a recital of English Song. Distinguished Welsh pianist Jocelyn Freeman will give a piano recital including works by Weber, Alissa Firsova, Ravel and Mussorgsky.



The inaugural May Gala Concert is a fund raising evening on Saturday 19 May comprising a three-course meal, recital, art exhibition and drinks reception. Musicians are cellist Miriam Wakeling (pictured left) and pianist Christopher Guild who present a recital including works by Bridge, Debussy and Ravel. The event takes place at 5.45pm and 7.30pm at St Thomas's Church, Manor Court St, Penkhull.

Photo - Julian Dyson

For more information and to book tickets, please visit
<http://www.penkhullfestival.com>

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News from members.....

Fidelio Trio have a very busy summer ahead of them with a concert tour of China from 7th to 21st April, and a visit to USA in July. The trio have numerous UK concerts plus a number of workshops during May and the première of William Bolcom's Piano Trio at St John's Smith Square on 2 June.

Meanwhile the **English Piano Trio** continues with concerts entitled "Insights" with Stephen Johnson at the Colston Hall, Bristol. On 8 May discussion and performance will be of the Shostakovich Piano Quintet, with Zsuzsa Berenyi and Morgan Goff and on 30 May of Bruch's "Kol Nidrei" and the Piano Trio no 1 in F by Saint Saens.

Table Music perform at the lunchtime concert series at Notting Hill on Monday 30 April.

Pianist **Bobby Chen** returns to UK after his recital at Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur when he performs in the Bowerman Hall (right) as part of the International Piano Recital Series at Monkton Combe School. He has also been invited to join the faculty for the first part of the Chethams Summer School for Pianists.



Eos Trio will be performing in the unusual venue of Brunel Museum's Shaft at the Brunel Museum, Rotherhithe on Wednesday 18 April at 7.00pm in a varied programme which includes Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* and the UK Premiere of 'On the Crest of the Sea' by the Greek composer Dimitris Maragopoulos.

A variety of works by composer **Graham Lynch** have been featured in concerts around the world this year including Belgium, USA, Finland, Germany, Spain and Equador.

Congratulations to **Maxim Calver**, cellist in the winning Menuhin School trio in our Junior Competition, who has reached the string finals in the BBC Young Musician Competition.

Hot on the heels of our own Competitions, we hear that In November corporate member the **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** will be bringing a phenomenal line-up of chamber music artists together to take part in a four-day celebration of piano chamber music. The festival will also incorporate recitals by eight young ensembles, chosen to take part in performances and masterclass alongside their own conservatoire students. From these eight ensembles, three will progress to a grand final where the winners will be offered support via mentorship, public engagements and a commercial recording, as well as a cash prize. All the jury members will also perform as part of the festival, creating an event that is collegiate and truly within the spirit of chamber music.

We are pleased to include amongst our members **John Ireland** and his wife **Shahla** who are keen concert goers and keep in touch about the piano trio concerts they have heard. They regularly visit the concerts held at the home of Bob and Elizabeth Boas, and have also attended the series of piano trio concerts which are taking place at St James's Piccadilly, where a variety of piano trio combinations appear with pianist Warren Mailley-Smith. They report that the Aquinas Piano Trio was particularly impressive at its performance at Conway Hall on Sunday 25 February when outstanding violinist Ruth Rogers was joined by cellist Katherine Jenkinson and pianist Martin Cousin.

Please keep the Editor up to date with all your news by emailing info@pianotriosociety.org.uk or ringing 01242 620736.

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Senior Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition

Sunday 29 April, 10.30 - 17.45, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Jury: Professors Michael Bochmann MBE, Robert Max, Benjamin Frith

We invite friends to join with us for this special day which will feature eight trios offering a varied repertoire competing for three cash prizes which have been sponsored by Philip Carne. There is no charge but we appreciate donations to help with the cost of the day.



Michael Bochmann MBE



Robert Max



Benjamin Frith

10.30 - Trio Doyenne - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Michelle Diers (violin) - Shannon Merciel (cello) - Monika Masanauskaite (piano)
Rachmaninoff - Élégaique Trio no 1 and Haydn - Hob XV:27 in C major complete

11.15 - Valette Piano Trio - Royal Northern College of Music

Lu Liu (violin) - Yuuki Bouterey-Ishido (cello) - Tianyang Han (piano)
Tchaikovsky Op 50 1st movement, Haydn Hob XV:27 1st movement, Shostakovich Op 67 2nd movement

12.05 - Trio Opal - Royal Academy of Music

Eriko Nagayama (violin) - Joel Siepmann (cello) - Yi-Shing Cheng (piano)
Ravel Trio 1st and 2nd movements, Schumann Op 63 3rd and 4th movements

12.50 - Meridies Trio - Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Anja Jamsek (violin) - Helena Svigelj (cello) - Jinah Shim (piano)
Mendelssohn Op 49 1st and 3rd movements, Shostakovich Op- 67 3rd and 4th movements

14.15 - Trio Citrine - Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Matthew Waters (violin) - Elin Kervegant (cello) - Nathan Reeves (piano)
Ravel Trio 1st and 2nd movements, Schubert "Notturmo"

14.50 - Mithras Trio - Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Ionel Manciu (violin) - Leo Popplewell (cello) - Dominic Degavino (piano)
Brahms Op 101 complete, Shostakovich Op 67 1st and 2nd movements

15.40 - Kosyakov Piano Trio - Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Shi Ling Chin (violin) - Ursula Miethe (cello) - Roman Kosyakov (piano)
Ireland Phantasie Trio, Rachmaninoff Élégaique Trio no 1

16.20 - Daphnis Trio - Royal College of Music

Maria Gilicel (violin) - Jobine Siekman (cello) - Maria Kustas (piano)
Haydn Hob XV:27 complete, Schumann Op 63 1st and 2nd movements

Adjudication, presentation of prizes and comments from the Jury 17.00 to 17.45