

Surrey Hills International Music Festival

15th Anniversary Season
2024



Patrons: Dame Sarah Connolly DBE Nicola Benedetti CBE Sir Nicolas Bratza Crispian Steele-Perkins

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Three Otokodate and the New Shimbashi Station, 1872. In the background: Edo-koike (1835-1950). Illustration from the book 'Edo' by Frank Milner.

Welcome to the Festival



Wu Qian, Artistic Director

Once again, we have a very exciting programme for you in 2024, full of wonderful music and extraordinary artists performing across our beautiful venues in the Surrey Hills. At the historic West Horsley Place, we feature 17th-century Italian women composers whose place in history is being rightfully restored, whilst the RHS Garden Wisley is again the stunning venue for some wonderful chamber music.

As always, we are looking towards the future with concerts by emerging artists from some of the UK's most venerable conservatoires, and after the amazing response and enthusiasm of two years ago, I am also delighted to be bringing back the Young Composer Competition. The winning entry in the Competition can be heard in a spectacular evening of music for two pianos at the Menuhin Hall. To bring this extraordinary celebration of music to a close, the festival's final concert will feature the magnificent Dame Sarah Connolly, performing glorious Bach and Handel arias with one of the UK's greatest early music ensembles, The English Concert.

Every year, I am humbled and eternally grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of our incredible staff, committee and, of course, you, our loyal and passionate audience. Your support has been invaluable as we strive to bring you the most beautiful music performed by the best musicians from all over the world. You are the reason that we make the festival happen and we can't wait to dazzle and delight you with our offering this year and continue to fulfil the vision that Tessa Marchington and I had 15 years ago when we founded the festival.

Wu Qian

SAVE THE DATES

Celebrating our 16th season

6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 15th and 17th May 2025

Guided walk and lunchtime talk with music for soprano, theorbo and viola da gamba

Tuesday 7th May | West Horsley Place, Epsom Road, West Horsley, KT24 6AN | 12.30pm

Notes from the Silence: Italian women composers of the 17th century

Writer and historian Anna Beer takes us on a journey through the splendour of 17th-century Italy

Anna Beer will be signing copies of her books after the event

Settimia Caccini

Due Luci Ridenti

Francesca Caccini

Dov'io credea le mie speranze vere
O Chiome Belle
O Vive Rose

Barbara Strozzi

Amor dormiglione
L'amante segreto

Anna Beer

Speaker

The Portrait Players

Claire Ward

Soprano

Jonatan Bougt

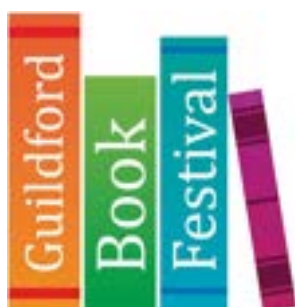
Theorbo

Miriam Nohl

Viola da gamba

(For this performance Jonatan Bougt will be replacing Kristiina Watt, the regular Theorbo player for The Portrait Players who is regrettably unavailable.)

This event is a publicity partnership with the Guildford Book Festival.



Anna Beer



Anna is a British author and lecturer, primarily known for her work as a biographer.

Her particular interests as a biographer are the relationship between literature, politics and history (which was the basis for her *Life of John Milton*, 2008) and the rediscovery of neglected lives. This was the motivation both for her book about Bess Throckmorton, the wife of Sir Walter Raleigh (2004) and her exploration of the lives and work of female composers, *Sounds and Sweet Airs: the forgotten women of classical music*, which was published in 2016 and shortlisted for the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards in 2017 for Creative Communication. More recently *Eve Bites Back: an Alternative History of English Literature* explores the lives and work of eight authors, including Jane Austen.

She was Lecturer in Literature at the Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford between 2003 and 2010, and remains a Fellow of Kellogg College.

The Portrait Players



Described as “beguiling”, The Portrait Players formed at the end of 2022 for a concert of Handel’s Cantatas and German Arias. Featuring Claire Ward (soprano), Kristiina Watt (theorbo/lute) and Miriam Nohl (cello/viola da gamba), the trio brings 17th and 18th-century repertoire to modern audiences with engaging programmes informed by historical characters.

In autumn 2023, they made their debut at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in a recital hosted by the City Music Foundation. They performed at the Brighton Early Music Festival in October 2023 and collaborated with Opera Prelude for two projects in London and Henley. Further concerts include performances in Greenwich, Barts’ Great Hall in the City of London, The Workshop Series Lewes, and University College Oxford.

Graduates of the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music, the members of The Portrait Players each lead busy freelance lives and work with many of Europe’s leading orchestras and ensembles, including The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Academy of Ancient Music, La Nuova Musica, The English Concert and The Monteverdi Choir.

Hosting Henry VIII



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Sitkovetsky Trio with Sharon Kam & Friends

Thursday 9th May | The Menuhin Hall, Stoke D'Abernon, KT11 3QQ | 6pm (pre-concert talk) 7.30pm (concert)

Kate Kennedy's pre-concert talk in discussion with **Huw Watkins** will offer an in-depth look into the programme for the evening's performance.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Trio No.4 in B flat major Op.11
'Gassenhauer'

Huw Watkins

Three Caprices (world premiere)

INTERVAL

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Clarinet Quintet in A major K.581

Sitkovetsky Trio

Alexander Sitkovetsky

Violin

Isang Enders

Cello

Wu Qian

Piano

with

Sharon Kam

Clarinet

Annabelle Meare

Violin

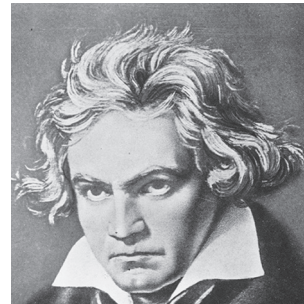
Lars Anders Tomter

Viola

With grateful thanks to the Vaughan Williams Foundation and the other Huw Watkins Commission Supporters for funding the composition of *Three Caprices*.

This performance is a publicity partnership with The Arts Society in Surrey.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)



Trio No.4 in B flat major Op.11 'Gassenhauer'

1. Allegro con brio
2. Adagio
3. Tema con variazioni ("Pria ch'io l'impegno": Allegretto)

The Trio Op.11, a relatively early work, was composed in 1797 and is scored for piano, clarinet or violin, and cello. It is the violin version which we will hear tonight. The work is also sometimes known as the '*Gassenhauer Trio*' because of its popular third movement, which contains nine variations on a theme from an operetta then running in Vienna. This tune, '*Pria ch'io l'impegno*' ("Before I go to work, I must have something to eat"(!)), really caught on and was being sung and whistled by everyone in the streets and back-alleys (Gassen) of Vienna.

The trio has three movements: a lively allegro, a slow second movement, and the celebrated theme we all know in the finale. We must relate the hilarious story attached to it.

In around 1800, Beethoven took part in a performance of his trio at a Vienna concert where one, Daniel Steibelt from Berlin, turned up. Steibelt had quite a following as a piano virtuoso and would certainly have considered himself greatly superior to the young Beethoven. His haughty and rather condescending manner did not go down too well with our composer. Steibelt listened distractedly to the trio, made a few airy compliments, and then presented a composition of his own, rounding it off with a few virtuoso trademarks, at which Beethoven formed the opinion that the man was a conceited show-off. A week later, at a concert at which Beethoven was also present, Steibelt played another of his pieces and then a showy improvisation on the theme Beethoven had used in the clarinet trio. This was clearly a calculated

challenge, and Beethoven had no choice but to respond. Egged on by the audience, he shuffled off to the piano, having casually picked up a score of the Steibelt piece, which he ostentatiously turned the wrong way up on the music stand. With one finger, he plucked out a few upside-down notes at random and, using these as a theme, began to improvise. His reputation as a brilliant improviser was famed throughout Vienna, and the result was probably sensational - and on a motif that was a pure insult. "Anything you can do I can do so much better" was the message and before the end of the outrage Steibelt had vanished from the hall. He later insisted that if he were to visit Vienna again, those who desired his presence would not invite Ludwig van Beethoven...

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Huw Thomas Watkins, MBE (born 1976)



Three Caprices (world premiere)

(Commissioned by Surrey Hills International Music Festival)

After writing *Four Fables* for clarinet, violin, cello and piano in 2018, I jumped at the chance to revisit this perfect combination of instruments a few years later, writing these *Three Caprices* in 2023. The first begins with assertive piano fanfares, sustained by the pedal, and immediately questioned by more hesitant strings. The clarinet enters later, thoughtful and lyrical, pacifying the piano, and soothing the strings. The second is slow, but builds to a powerful climax with the three melody instruments playing together at the very top of their ranges. The third is the fastest, beginning nervously but becoming more confident and joyful as it proceeds, and ending somewhere else entirely. The *Three Caprices* run without a break.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)



Clarinet Quintet in A major K.581

1. Allegro
2. Larghetto
3. Menuetto with Trio I and Trio II
4. Allegretto con variazioni,

This quintet was written in 1789, a year in which the composer's life had taken a difficult turn. The problem was money, and in Mozart's letters from that year, a series of requests for financial help, mostly addressed to his usually generous fellow mason Michael Puchberg, looms large. It is heartrending to read the constant stream of pleas for help, reminders, regrets, and subsequent further pleas... As well as money, of course, he needed work. For one reason or another, his reputation was distinctly on the wane, and he had constantly to sue for commissions. He did not have regular, well-paid employment; he had a wife and family to support, and performances of his compositions earned him no money from royalties as they would today.

Yet the music he wrote at this time gives little hint of his troubles. For example, the lovely quintet we hear tonight radiates a serene happiness, with the solo clarinet expressing a state of calm and peaceful resignation.

The inspiration for the quintet was the playing of Mozart's friend and fellow mason Anton Stadler, a member of the Imperial Court orchestra, and giant strides in acceptance of clarinet as a serious solo instrument came with the works Mozart composed for Stadler – the *Clarinet Trio* in 1786, this *Quintet* in 1798 (which in one of his letters he referred to as "Stadler's quintet") and the *Clarinet Concerto* in 1791, the last year of Mozart's life.

By all accounts, Stadler was something of a rogue, certainly in money matters, but his "soft" and "voice-like" playing was divine. As the quintet opens with an easy-flowing theme from the strings, we hear the clarinet joining

Sitkovetsky Trio with Sharon Kam & Friends

Programme notes and performers

with them in a dialogue, often weaving around and singing its own improvisation. The Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein (possibly a distant cousin of Albert the physicist) has suggested that “there is no dualism here between soloist and accompaniment here, only fraternal rivalry”- a nudge in a masonic direction perhaps.

Seldom is serenity more powerfully conveyed in music than in the beautiful Larghetto second movement, a continuous cantilena for the clarinet, occasionally balanced by a solo string passage. The third movement minuet contains two trios, the first played by the quartet alone, the second is a Ländler in which the clarinet reverts to the rustic instrument of a country band. The Allegretto finale is a set of variations, mostly brief and amusing but turning to a slow, pensive late variation before we hear the theme for the last time

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Sitkovetsky Trio



Credit: Jiyang Chen

The Sitkovetsky Trio has established itself as an exceptional piano trio of today. Their thoughtful and committed approach has brought the ensemble critical acclaim and invitations to renowned concert halls around the world including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Palais des Beaux Arts, Musée du Louvre, l’Auditori Barcelona, Wigmore Hall or Lincoln Center New York.

Recently the Sitkovetsky Trio received the Chamber Music Award of the BBC Music Magazine. Furthermore they are first prize-winners of the International Commerzbank Chamber Music Award and recipients of the NORDMETALL Chamber Music Award at the MecklenburgVorpommern Festival, as well as the Philharmonia-Martin Chamber Music Award.

They have been supported by the Hattori Foundation, the Musicians Benevolent Fund, the Fidelio Trust and the Swiss Global Artistic Foundation. Last season, the Sitkovetsky Trio received a generous funding from the Initiative Musik as part of the Neustart Kultur programme launched by the German government.

The 2022/23 season began with a great tour through South America, including concerts in Bogotá, Lima and Sao Paulo. A special highlight has been the return invitation to the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, as well as concerts at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and the Alte Oper Frankfurt. As part of their tours through the USA, the trio perform at Lincoln Center in New York, in Los Angeles and Seattle. The season will culminate in concerts at Wigmore Hall London and Philharmonie Haarlem, as well as a project with Messiaen’s *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* with Andreas Ottensamer and Pablo Barragán, including concerts in Bilbao and Barcelona.

Alexander Sitkovetsky is playing a Stradivari violin (Cremona, 1697) and Isang Enders is playing a cello by Carlo Tononi (Venice, 1720); both instruments have been kindly loaned by the J. & A. Beare Violin Society.

Sharon Kam



Credit: Nancy Horowitz

Sharon Kam is one of the world’s leading clarinet soloists and has been working with renowned orchestras in the United States, Europe, and Japan for over 20 years.

Mozart’s clarinet masterpieces have been an object of artistic focus for Ms. Kam since the beginning of her career. At the age of 16, she performed the Mozart Clarinet Concerto in her orchestral debut with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Zubin Mehta.

Highlights in the 2023/24 season include concerts with the Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, the Dusseldorf Philharmonic, and concerts with her trio colleagues Enrico Pace and Julian Steckel and the Jerusalem Quartet.

Annabelle Meare



Credit: Marina Vidor

Annabelle Meare is Joint Principal 2nd Violin of the Philharmonia Orchestra and a member of of the ECO String Quartet, the stand-out chamber ensemble of the English Chamber Orchestra.

Other artists groups with whom she has worked include the Vertavo Quartet, the European Camerata, the Festival Strings of Canada, the London Conchord Ensemble, and the Melchior Ensemble.

Lars Anders Tomter



Lars Anders Tomter is one of today's most outstanding violists. Born in Hamar, Norway, he began to play the violin at the age of eight and also took up the viola. He was awarded a special prize for his interpretation of Bartók's Viola Concerto at the International Viola Competition in Budapest in 1984. Then, he went on to win the Maurice Vieux International Competition in Lille in 1986.

Lars Anders Tomter has distinguished himself by performing new music extensively, including the world premiere of four concertos by Ragnar Söderlind, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Rolf Wallin, and Anders Eliasson, which were all written for him. In 2011, he recorded Vagn Holmboe's Viola Concerto with the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, which was released on the Dacapo label. In 2015, he recorded Poul Ruders' Viola Concerto with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, and in 2016, he performed Egil Hovland's Viola Concerto with the Oslo Philharmonic.

Huw Watkins

British composer and pianist Huw Watkins was born in South Wales, he studied piano and composition at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, where he received piano lessons from Peter Lawson. He then went on to read music at King's College, Cambridge, where he studied composition with Robin Holloway and Alexander Goehr, and completed an MMus in composition at the Royal College of Music, where he studied with Julian Anderson. Huw Watkins was awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, where he used to teach composition. He is currently Honorary Research Fellow at the Royal College of Music.

An Enchanted Evening: Chamber Music at Wisley

Saturday 11 May | Garden Room, RHS Hilltop, RHS Garden Wisley, GU23 6QB | 7.30pm

Felix Mendelssohn

Octet in E flat major Op.20

INTERVAL

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

'Souvenir de Florence' Op.70

Alexander Sitkovetsky

Violin

Jack Liebeck

Violin

So-Ock Kim

Violin

Alexandra Raikhlina

Violin

Lars Anders Tomter

Viola

Brett Dean

Viola

Leonard Elschenbroich

Cello

Isang Enders

Cello

We are very grateful for the generous support for this concert provided by:

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Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)



Octet in E Flat major Op.20

1. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
2. Andante
3. Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
4. Presto

A half-hour classical work for a small group of strings in a conventional four-movement layout may sound nothing out of the ordinary, but there is nothing "ordinary" about this piece. It is quite simply a masterpiece, one of the miracles of nineteenth-century chamber music. The work itself is miraculous for its musical content, but the marvel is enhanced by the fact that it was written by a boy of sixteen.

Felix Mendelssohn was no ordinary sixteen-year-old, of course. He chose his parents well, being born into a wealthy music-loving family whose Berlin home regularly hosted their Sunday morning concerts. It was at these gatherings that the young Felix gained much of his musical education, both as a listener and performer. As well as the piano, he also played the violin and the viola and regularly took part in performances of the several string symphonies he had already composed. It was, no doubt, the experience of writing these symphonies that enabled him to produce so effortlessly at such an early age something as perfect as his Octet, which he wrote in 1825.

This astonishing work did not, therefore, come from nowhere. Mendelssohn had been immersed in music and much else from a very

early age. As a twelve-year-old, he had played to the great Goethe, who, some fifty years previously, had also met the very young Mozart. Goethe's verdict was that Mendelssohn was infinitely more gifted.

The Octet's original score is for four violins and pairs of violas and cellos. Still, Mendelssohn's instructions in the score were that it was not for two string quartets, rather 'This Octet must be played by all the instruments in symphonic orchestral style. Pianos and fortes must be strictly observed and more strongly emphasized than is usual in pieces of this character.'

The piece begins with a lively Allegro first movement, with the first violins soaring almost three octaves. It is followed by a gently thoughtful Andante second movement, then comes fairy music, a foretaste of the Scherzo from A Midsummer Night's Dream that Mendelssohn would compose later. The lively final movement begins with a bustling fugue, a technique learned from the young composer's extensive studies of Bach (he would later resurrect the forgotten St Matthew Passion and conduct it in Leipzig) and, after triumphant quoting from Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, concludes in a mood of utter exuberance.

Mendelssohn later described the Octet as 'my favorite of all my compositions' and added, 'I had a most wonderful time in the writing of it!'

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



'Souvenir de Florence' Op.70

1. Allegro con spirito
2. Adagio cantabile e con moto
3. Allegretto moderato
4. Allegro vivace

Tchaikovsky wrote excitedly from Florence to his patroness, Madame Nazdena von Meck, 'I hope you will be pleased to hear that I have written a string sextet. I know your love of chamber music... I wrote it with the greatest pleasure and enthusiasm, and with no effort at all.'

Perhaps this is not the whole truth, as his letters tell of the difficulties he had with the work. 'I consciously feel I haven't got six real people at all, that I'm actually writing for orchestra and re-arranging for six instruments. But maybe it will go better when I've got the hang of things...'

But eventually, Tchaikovsky certainly 'got the hang of things', as the piece sounds effortless. There is no overt connection with Florence in the music – we must simply accept that its relaxed mood recalls the composer's happiness at being in a particular place at a particular time and in an easy climate. He was particularly fortunate in that the patronage of Madame von Meck made regular visits to Florence and elsewhere possible. There was an extraordinary arrangement by which it was agreed that they were never to meet, even though they might both have been in Florence at the same time on at least one occasion.

The first of the four movements opens cheerfully, on a steady beat. The lovely second movement begins with a sonorous rich introduction, which leads into the gentle main theme, followed by a mysterious second section, which Tchaikovsky felt should be played with 'an improbable pppp, just discernible, like summer lightning'. The first theme returns lovingly played on the cellos to a pizzicato accompaniment.

A lively third movement, a sort of scherzo, comes next, including a quick dancing section, which could be straight out of one of the composer's ballet scores. The finale starts with a folk-like theme, to be played, Tchaikovsky instructed, 'brightly and enthusiastically'. A brief fugue follows, leading into the Big Tune, which adds some weight to the work's last pages. There is much excitement at the end, and one can only nod in agreement with the composer's eventual verdict of the 'greatest pleasure and enthusiasm, and with no effort at all'.

Alexander Sitkovetsky



Alexander Sitkovetsky was born into a family with a well-established musical tradition in Moscow.

An enchanted Evening: Chamber Music at Wisley

Performers

His concerto debut came at the age of eight, and in the same year, he moved to the UK to study at the Menuhin School. Lord Menuhin was his inspiration throughout his school years, and they performed together on several occasions.

Highlights of his recent concerto performances include appearances with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonietta Rīga, Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, European Union Chamber Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Academy of St. Martin's in the Fields, Moscow Symphony Orchestra, St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Filarmónica de Bolivia, National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Russian State Philharmonic Orchestra, Residentie Orkest The Hague, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Welsh National Opera Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Novosibirsk Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Arctic Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and the Anhaltische Philharmonie Dessau.

He is also much in demand as a director. He has directed and performed as a soloist regularly with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, London Mozart Players, Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Players, Camerata Zurich and the Arctic Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra.

Jack Liebeck



British/German violinist, director and festival director Jack Liebeck possesses 'flawless technical mastery' and a 'beguiling silvery tone' (BBC Music Magazine). Jack is the Royal Academy of Music's first Émile Sauret Professor

of Violin and Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

Jack's playing embraces the worlds of elegant chamber-chic Mozart through to the impassioned mastery required to frame Brett Dean's *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*, and he has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras, conductors, and chamber musicians. Jack's fascination with all things scientific has led to two new concertos being written for him and regular collaborator Professor Brian Cox - Dario Marianelli's *Voyager Violin Concerto* and Paul Dean's *A Brief History of Time* commissioned by Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in commemoration of Professor Stephen Hawking.

In the summer of 2023, Jack gave the online premiere of Taylor Scott Davis's new concerto for violin, choir & orchestra, *To Sing of Love: a Triptych* with the VOCES8 Foundation Choir and Orchestra conducted by Barnaby Smith, as part of *LIVE From London*, commissioned for Jack this will be released on album in 2024.

Jack plays the 'Ex-Wilhelmj' J.B. Guadagnini dated 1785 and is generously loaned a Joseph Henry bow by Kathron Sturrock in the memory of her late husband Professor David Bennett.

So-Ock Kim



Born in Seoul in 1982, So-ock moved to London at the age of three.

At fifteen, she was the youngest ever winner of the gold medal in the prestigious Shell/LSO Competition, playing the Tchaikovsky concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra in the Barbican Hall. At nineteen, So-Ock was selected for the Young Concert Artists Trust. Her teachers have included Itzhak Rashkovsky, Felix Andrievsky and David Takeno.

So-Ock has given numerous critically acclaimed performances around the world and at the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall and Barbican Hall in London. Abroad, she has comprehensively toured throughout Asia, Europe and the US, performing concertos and recitals in various international music festivals, such as Schleswig Holstein, Beethoven Festival, Ravinia, Mecklenburg, BBC Proms, Radio France Festival, Herrenchimsee, Seoul Spring, Casals and Aldeburgh. Many of her performances have been broadcast on radio and television worldwide.

She has made numerous acclaimed international performances with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Sofia Philharmonic, Orchestre Nationale de Montpellier, KBS Symphony, Torino Philharmonic, Seoul Philharmonic, Mexico State, and Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestras. She has recently performed with Krzysztof Penderecki and the Polish Radio Orchestra, Vladimir Ashkenazy and the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra with Vassily Petrenko, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Opera North, City of London Sinfonia, London Mozart Players, Suwon Philharmonic, Korean Chamber Orchestra, Westdeutsche Sinfonia and the English Chamber Orchestra.

So-Ock plays a 1706 Stradivarius violin.

Alexandra Raikhlina



'Raikhlina's richly toned elegiac song really hit its mark' The Strad

Moscow born Belgian violinist. Laureate of the 'Charles de Berio' competition before being awarded a place at the Yehudi Menuhin School.

Alexandra has performed as a soloist and a chamber musician in Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Fairfield Halls, Sage Gateshead and Elbphilharmonie. She has appeared as a soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia amongst others.

Alexandra's BBC Proms appearance was part of the 'Composers Portrait' programme broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Other radio appearances have

included performances on BBC Radio 3's 'Free Thinking Festival'.

Alexandra is Artistic Director of Brundibar Arts Festival based in Newcastle and Brussels.

Alexandra has recently released her CD 'Forgotten Voices Rediscovered' to great critical acclaim.

Lars Anders Tomter



Lars Anders Tomter is one of today's most outstanding violists. Born in Hamar, Norway, he began to play the violin at the age of eight and also took up the viola. Both instruments he studied with Professor Leif.

Jørgensen at the Oslo Music Conservatory and the Norwegian State Academy. He then continued his studies with Professor Max Rostal and with Sándor Vegh. He was awarded a special prize for his interpretation of Bartók's Viola Concerto at the International Viola Competition in Budapest in 1984. Then, he went on to win the Maurice Vieux International Competition in Lille in 1986.

Lars Anders Tomter has distinguished himself by performing new music extensively, including the world premiere of four concertos by Ragnar Söderlind, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Rolf Wallin, and Anders Eliasson, which were all written for him.

Brett Dean



Dean was born and studied in Australia before moving to Germany, where he was a member of the Berlin Philharmonic for fourteen years and began composing. His music is championed by many of the leading conductors and orchestras

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Performers

worldwide, including Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Harding, Andris Nelsons, and Marin Alsop.

Dean began composing in 1988, gaining international recognition through works such as his clarinet concerto *Ariel's Music* (1995), which won a UNESCO Composers award, and *Carlo* (1997), inspired by the music of Carlo Gesualdo. In 2009 Dean won the Grawemeyer Award for violin concerto *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*, and in June 2017 his second opera *Hamlet* was premiered at Glyndebourne Festival Opera to great acclaim, winning awards at the South Bank Sky Arts Awards and the International Opera Awards. Dean also appears with many of the world's leading orchestras, ensembles, and festivals as a conductor and as violist performing his *Viola Concerto* and chamber music.

Brett Dean is Composer in Residence at Wigmore Hall for the 2023/24 season, where he has curated a series of programmes and features as conductor and performer.

Leonard Elschenbroich



Born in 1985 in Frankfurt, Elschenbroich received a scholarship, aged ten, to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School in London. He later studied with Frans Helmerson at the Cologne Music Academy.

Described by the *New York Times* as 'a musician of great technical prowess, intellectual curiosity and expressive depth', cellist Leonard Elschenbroich has performed as a soloist with the world's leading orchestras.

In 2012 he co-founded the Orquesta Filarmonica de Bolivia, the first orchestra to perform a Mahler Symphony in the nation's history. Elschenbroich returns to Bolivia on a regular basis to lead educational projects and

develop the orchestra. This commitment led Elschenbroich to explore the field of conducting with various orchestras across Latin America and the UK. His London conducting debut led *The Telegraph* to write '*Elschenbroich gave a performance of Brahms' 1st Symphony that at times touched the heights.*'

He plays a cello made by Matteo Goffriller "Ex-Leonard Rose-Ex-Alfredo Piatti" (Venice, 1693), on private loan.

Isang Enders



Isang Enders has quickly established himself as a dynamic artist in search of new concepts and works for the violoncello. Born into a German-Korean musician family in Frankfurt in 1988, Isang Enders began studying with Michael Sanderling at the age of twelve.

At the age of twenty, Isang Enders was appointed principal cello of the Dresden Staatskapelle, making him the youngest section leader in Germany. During his four years with the orchestra, he co-founded the Gohrlich Shostakovich Festival alongside Tobias Niederschlag.

Isang Enders recently made his debut with the Philharmonia Orchestra, enjoyed collaborations with the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker and Stavanger Symphony orchestras and performs regularly with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. He has worked with eminent conductors, including Myung-Whun Chung, Christoph Eschenbach, Pablo Heras-Casado, Eliahu Inbal, Zubin Mehta and Vasily Petrenko.

Isang Enders is signed to Berlin Classics and SONY Music Entertainment and plays an instrument by Jean Baptiste Vuillaume (Paris, 1840).

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Young Artists Concert

Monday 13 May | St Michael's Church, Church Street, Betchworth, RH7 7DN | 12.30pm

Ysaÿe: Solo Sonata No.6

Kipper Yang - violin

Mertz: Tarantelle and Mazurka Op.13

Simon Taniguchi Nivy - guitar

Sarasate: Playera from Spanish

Dances

Milla Stevenson - violin

Rebecca You - piano

Cassadó: Dance of the Green Devil

Kiki Skinner - cello

Rebecca You - piano

Vieuxtemps: Rondino from 3 Salon

Pieces Op.32

Anamaria Prendi - violin

Esha Zhu - piano

Paganini: Variations on the Theme

from Rossini's "Moses"

Naomi Graffe - cello

Esha Zhu - piano

Saint-Saëns: Introduction and Rondo

Capriccioso

Seoyul Kim - violin

Rebecca You - piano

All performers are from the Yehudi Menuhin School

Our Artistic Director Wu Qian's strong connection with the Surrey Hills has its roots in the time she spent studying piano at The Yehudi Menuhin School. The school was founded by celebrated violinist Yehudi Menuhin in 1963 to provide a place for musically gifted children from around the world to develop their talents to the highest level within a nurturing and stimulating academic environment, regardless of their economic background, and when Qian arrived there from Shanghai aged just 13 Lord Menuhin himself was still very much a vital presence at the school. His holistic approach to musical studies was an inspiration, and she is delighted to be able to maintain such warm links with the school through the Festival, presenting SHIMF concerts at The Menuhin Hall each year and also providing invaluable performance experience for some of the school's current students in Young Artist Concerts such as this one.

We are delighted to welcome today's performers to the tranquil setting of St Michael's church which dates from the 12th century and is on the site of an earlier Saxon church. The church featured as the setting for the first wedding in the classic British film, 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' (1994).




The
Yehudi
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School

Credit: Sarah Porter

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Piano Extravaganza: a spectacular evening of music for two pianos

Thursday 16 May | The Menuhin Hall, Stoke D'Abernon, KT11 3QQ | 7.30pm

Pianists

Katya Apekisheva

Charles Owen

Juho Pohjonen

Wu Qian

Anton Arensky

Suite for Two Pianos No.1 Op.15

Witold Lutoslawski

Paganini Variations for Two Pianos

Sergei Rachmaninov

Suite No.2 for Two Pianos Op.17

INTERVAL

Borimir Ivanov

Festival of The Hills

(2024 Surrey Hills Young Composer Competition 1st prize winner)

Johannes Brahms

Variations on a Theme by Haydn Op.56

Henri Dutilleux

Figures de Résonances

Maurice Ravel

La Valse

We are very grateful to John Rigg for his kind sponsorship of the 2024 Surrey Hills Young Composer Competition

Anton Arensky (1861-1906)



Suite for 2 pianos No.1 Op.15

1. Romance
2. Valse
3. Polonaise

Anton Stepanovich Arensky, although one of the most lyrically gifted Russian composers of the nineteenth century, is now remembered only for a handful of works. Some of his chamber music is especially memorable, and his first Piano Trio, in particular, is well worth investigating. He was a pupil of Rimsky Korsakov and Tchaikovsky and became a professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, where Rachmaninov was one of his students. His relatively early death at the age of 44 in a sanatorium in Finland is partly attributed to a somewhat dissolute lifestyle - he certainly seems to have had a drink problem. But he had a remarkable gift of melody, demonstrated beautifully in the first of his suites for two pianos, written in 1888. Both the Romance and the Valse have deceptively simple tunes. Yet, Arensky succeeds in delighting the listener with his graceful embellishments, which thoroughly reflect the elegant cultural background of Tsarist Russia. The last movement of this suite is an evocation of the Polonaise, which always opened the balls for the Imperial Court: not so much a dance here as a stately procession in which guests formed themselves into two lines, leaving an aisle down the middle of the ballroom through which the Emperor and his consort would promenade.

Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994)



The well-known No.24 of Paganini's violin caprices has proved an attractive subject for variation to several composers, notably Brahms and Rachmaninov. This set by Polish composer Lutoslawski was originally composed in 1941. It is short but brilliant and great fun.

In the years leading up to Lutoslawski's completion of this piece, the composer had been an officer in the Polish Army when the Germans invaded. He escaped capture and fled on foot more than four hundred kilometres to his home in Warsaw, where he formed a piano duo with fellow composer Andrzej Panufnik. They performed in small cafés to make a living, and by the time the Warsaw Uprising had broken out, both pianists had left the capital. Of all the music Lutoslawski had written before they went, only the Variations survived. It was first played with Lutoslawski on the first piano and Panufnik on the second.

The work is part humorous parody and part furious display of virtuosity. With an added twelfth variation and finale, the theme and eleven variations poke fun at the fact that even a café audience will probably recognize Paganini's catchy tune. Paganini's original caprice was, of course, designed to show off effects only playable on the violin, and more humour comes as we hear the pianists attempting to mimic pizzicato, harmonics, double-stops, and other tricks of the fiddler's trade as best they can.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)



Suite No.2 for two pianos Op.17

1. Introduction (Alla marcia, in C major)
2. Valse (Presto, in G major)
3. Romance (Andantino, in A-flat major)
4. Tarantelle (Presto, in C minor)

This was some of the first music Rachmaninov wrote after the disastrous failure of his first symphony in 1897. In a depressed and understandably fragile state, Rachmaninov went to see a hypnotherapist for help and confidence in his abilities was gradually restored. The success of a December 1900 performance of two movements from his Second Piano Concerto - a work he dedicated to his therapist - also encouraged him.

Rachmaninov composed the suite during this period. It was completed in April 1901, a work assertive and positive right from the start. The lively opening march provides a good introduction and is followed by a sparkling waltz, the first of the work's two dances. Throughout the Suite, Rachmaninov integrates the parts for the two pianos so they can hardly be distinguished. During the middle of the waltz, we get one of the composer's characteristic big tunes, a ripely romantic melody pounded out in chords over a flowing accompaniment.

The lovely third-movement Romance is pure Rachmaninov, almost sentimental. Most of the movement is introspective, but there is a passionate climax at its centre. The suite closes with a tarantella, an Italian dance whose wild movements, we are told, were once thought to cure the bite of a tarantula. Here, again, we find the composer at his best, crafting a finale that demands staggering virtuosity from both players.

Piano Extravaganza: a spectacular evening of music for two pianos

Programme notes and performers

The work was first performed in Moscow in the year of its composition, 1901, by the composer and his cousin Alexander Siloti. In the early 1940s, just before Rachmaninov's death, he and Vladimir Horowitz played the piece at a party in Los Angeles, the only time two of the century's greatest pianists ever performed together.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)



Variations on a Theme of Haydn Op.56a

Brahms had written several sets of variations on themes of other composers - Schumann, Paganini, Handel, all for the piano – before he set about these 'Haydn' variations of 1873. The quotation marks are, of course, because the theme was probably not by Haydn at all. It is from the second movement of a 'Feld-Partit' for eight wind instruments, discovered by the Haydn biographer CF Pohl, who showed it to his friend Brahms. The partita was first ascribed to Haydn, then to Haydn's star pupil Ignaz Pleyel, who in turn may well have taken the theme, headed Chorale St Antoni, from some older unidentified score. Brahms seized on it, clearly believing it to be by Haydn - that is how his composition was published, though the work is often referred to as 'Variations on the St Anthony Chorale' today. The result was one of the finest examples of variation form and one of the composer's best-loved creations. Brahms was notoriously hesitant as to which form some of his compositions should take, and these variations exist, both in this version for two pianos (which probably came first) and the perhaps better-known orchestral arrangement. There are eight variations, including a mournful version of the theme, an excited scherzo with Mendelssohnian fairy music, a lively scene imitating hunting

horns, a gentle, graceful Siciliana and a mysterious, dark interlude providing a contrast to the triumphant finale when the main chorale is firmly restated.

Henri Dutilleux (1916-2013)



Figures de Résonances

Dutilleux, greatly influenced by his French contemporaries, Ravel, Debussy, and Roussel, developed a style very much of his own, and this work is quite unlike anything else in tonight's programme. *Figures de Résonances* comprises four movements. Exploring interactive sonority between two pianos, it makes some demands on listeners used to, or expecting to hear, tunes. The work lasts around 8 minutes.

'In his childhood, Dutilleux would sit at a piano and try to imitate the sounds of the town carillon in Douai; the completion of these pieces in his sixtieth year is perhaps an expression of that early interest in bell-like sonorities. Clearly influenced by Debussy, especially in terms of the generally modal language and ear for colour (do we hear the bells of The Submerged Cathedral?), these pieces also owe something to the brevity of Webern and the general character of Eastern philosophies such as Zen Buddhism. Focusing on acoustic and harmonic parameters, they are based on a conception of piano sound that is fundamentally sensual. Dutilleux uses unusual pedal techniques and silently depressed chords and clusters to create sympathetic vibrations between the pianos. Subtle and beautiful relationships develop between the two instruments as acoustic phenomena interact with recurring pitches, sonorities, and "mirror" structures'. (With acknowledgements to the Contemporary Music Society of Quebec).

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)



La Valse

Written in the immediate aftermath of World War I, La Valse is often felt to depict the end of an era and the wonderful dance that characterised it. Ravel sets the scene in the preface to the published score of his bitter-sweet tribute:

“Whirling clouds give glimpses, through rifts, of couples dancing. The clouds scatter, little by little. One sees an immense hall peopled with a twirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth, fortissimo. An imperial court, in or about 1855.”

We are in the golden age of the Viennese waltz of Johann Strauss. The murky opening with rumblings in the bass evolves into a great Viennese waltz, but as the piece unfolds, a menacing irony simmers, the waltz becomes increasingly dissonant, and the music grows more and more feverish and frantic to an explosive end. Is this hastening to the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and are we experiencing the apotheosis of the waltz at the same time as the carnage and destruction of the First World War? Ravel had served as a medical orderly during the conflict and had certainly witnessed many horrors, but he rather discouraged such a dramatic interpretation of La Valse. It is nevertheless anything but a cheerful depiction of the glittering world of The Waltz King.

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Katya Apekisheva



Born in Moscow into a family of musicians, Katya Apekisheva attended the Gnessin Music School for exceptionally gifted children, making her stage debut at the age of 12. She continued her studies in Jerusalem at the Rubin Music Academy and later at the Royal College of Music in London. From these auspicious beginnings, she went on to be a prizewinner of the Leeds International Piano Competition and has gone on to enjoy a career performing with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Halle Orchestra, the Moscow Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony, the English Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, working with renowned conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, David Shallon, Jan Latham-Koenig and Alexander Lazarev.

As a recording artist, Katya has received widespread critical acclaim for her interpretations, from Gramophone Magazine's Editor's Choice award and International Piano Magazine's Critics' Choice to Classic FM's CD of the week and a Classical Brit award, to name but a few. Katya's discography includes solo and chamber works by Mussorgsky, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Dvorak, and Rachmaninov.

Charles Owen



Owen has performed in major concert venues around the world, including the Barbican Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Bridgewater Hall, the Sage

Piano Extravaganza: a spectacular evening of music for two pianos

Performers

Gateshead, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, the Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Brahms Saal in Vienna's Musikverein, Musée d'Orsay, and Moscow Conservatoire.

Owen has performed concertos with world-renowned orchestras, including the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, The Hallé, Aurora Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He has collaborated with leading conductors such as Sir Mark Elder, Ryan Wigglesworth, Nicholas Collon and Martyn Brabbins.

Juho Pohjonen



Juho Pohjonen is regarded as one of today's most exciting and unique instrumentalists. The Finnish pianist performs widely in Europe, Asia, and North America, collaborating with symphony orchestras and playing in recital and chamber settings. An ardent exponent of Scandinavian music, Pohjonen's growing discography offers a showcase of music by Finnish compatriots such as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kaija Saariaho, and Jean Sibelius.

Pohjonen's illustrious curriculum vitae of concerto performances reveals a musician in demand internationally. He has appeared as a soloist with many orchestras worldwide, including the BBC Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Danish National Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, LA Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony.

Wu Qian



The Festival's Artistic Director was born in Shanghai but began her long-standing association with the Surrey Hills when she moved here aged 13 to study at The Yehudi Menuhin School. It was following her further studies at the Royal Academy of Music that she and SHIMF co-founder Tessa Marchington first planned a music festival here, and its development over 15 years is a source of enormous pride.

It is testament to her incredible energy, commitment and passion that over those same years spent nurturing the development of the Festival, Qian has built an extraordinary international career not only as one of the brightest young soloists performing today in venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, but also as a founding member of the Sitkovetsky Trio which, together with the Philharmonia, gave the world premiere of the Charlotte Bray Triple Concerto 'Germinate' commissioned by the Festival for its 2019 season.

Qian is a winner of a 2016 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award and of the first prize at the Trio di Trieste Duo Competition with Alexander Sitkovetsky, and performs regularly in the United States each season as member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.



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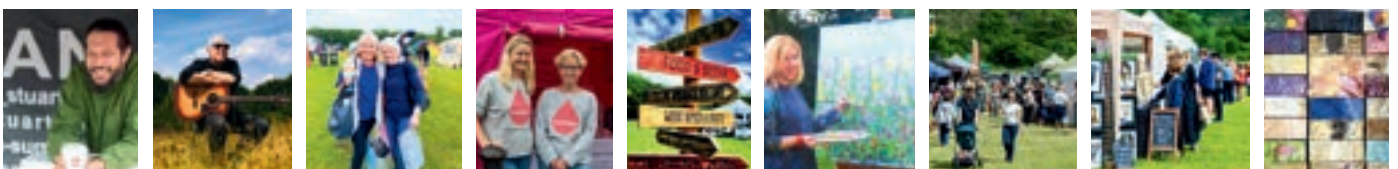
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Festival Finale: Dame Sarah Connolly with The English Concert

Saturday 18 May | Holy Trinity Church | High Street, Guildford, GU1 3RR | 7.30pm

Johann Sebastian Bach

Widerstehe doch der Sünde BWV 54 (opening aria)

Vergnügte ruh BWV 170 (opening aria)

Trio über Allein Gott BWV 676

Bereite dich Zion (from Christmas Oratorio)

Schlafe mein Liebster (from Christmas Oratorio)

INTERVAL

George Frideric Handel

Overture to Solomon & Arrival of Queen of Sheba

Will the sun forget to streak (from Solomon)

What though I trace each herb and flow'r (from Solomon)

Overture to Theodora

As with Rosy steps (from Theodora)

Defend her, Heav'n (from Theodora)

The English Concert

Harry Bicket

Conductor

Dame Sarah Connolly

Mezzo-Soprano

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)



Bach's enormous production of cantatas (probably about 300) in Leipzig, where he was responsible for the church music in the town's four main churches, and previously in Weimar, combined with their remarkable quality, is one of the most wonderful creative outbursts in music history. The short Cantata 54 **Widerstehe doch der Sünde**, written during Bach's time in Weimar, is for alto soloist, strings, and basso continuo only. This first aria warns against the temptation and deadly poison of sin and has been described as one of Bach's best musical sermons. Cantata 170 **Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust** was written in Leipzig. It is a solo cantata for alto, again without choir. Instead of drawing on the bible, the text is a poem by Georg Christian Lehms, based on passages from the Sermon on the Mount dealing with man's malice, his miserable existence, and his longing for peace in death.

Trio über Allein Gott BWV 676 is an arrangement of a three-part invention for an organ. The chorale on which the original piece is based is the Lutheran equivalent of the Gloria in the mass. The original organist would have had to play three fully independent voices on two manuals and pedal, something quite challenging for the player. It is a most beautiful melody, now heard in an expanded instrumental arrangement.

The **Christmas Oratorio** BWV 248, in six parts, each part a cantata, was intended for performance in a church service on a feast day of the Christmas period. It was written for the Christmas season of 1734 and incorporates much from earlier compositions, using music he had already composed and giving new words to the choruses and arias. Despite being conceived

in six parts (each section combines choruses, chorales and from the soloists, recitatives, and arias), the composer clearly envisaged the work to be heard as one united whole.

Tonight's two arias from the Christmas Oratorio are ***Bereite dich Zion*** from Part 1 (The Nativity) and ***Schlafe, mein Liebster*** from Part 2 (Annunciation to the Shepherds). The music (not the words!) of both arias originated in an earlier secular cantata (about Hercules!), ***Lasst uns sorgen, lasst uns wachen*** BWV 213.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)



Handel composed at least 42 operas, many after his arrival in England. By the mid-1730s, tastes were beginning to change, and Handel moved from stage pieces in the Italian language to oratorios, often on a biblical theme, always in the English language and sometimes on a theme that could be linked to the glory of the host country. The oratorio ***Solomon***, first performed in London in 1748, celebrated Solomon's achievements, his wisdom, and the splendour of his kingdom as a Golden Age of peace and prosperity. The oratorio was inevitably recognised by commentators of the day as a eulogy for Georgian England, with the just and wise King Solomon representing King George II and the mighty, prosperous kingdom of Israel reflecting the similarly happy state of England at the time of the work's première.

The ***Overture*** starts in a serious, solemn mood before moving on to lively music to alert everyone to the entertaining tale that is to come. Sinfonia (***The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba***) is one of Handel's best-known pieces. On a state visit to Solomon's kingdom, the foreign Queen is entertained by the king and his people. The Queen of Sheba goes on to sing the beautiful ***Will the sun forget to streak***, a marvellous piece for voice and baroque oboe combination. ('The sun will rise no more if Sheba forgets the magnificence she has seen and the wisdom she has learnt at Solomon's court'). Earlier in the work, Solomon sings ***What though I trace each herb and flow'r***,

modestly congratulating himself on having built The Temple, rejoicing in his good fortune and married happiness to his one and only beloved wife. As with other Great Rulers, he is here resorting to 'Alternative Facts', as in the Old Testament, we read that Solomon actually had hundreds of wives and concubines.

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Dame Sarah Connolly



Credit: Christopher Pledger

Sarah Connolly was made a DBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours, having previously been awarded a CBE in the 2010 New Year Honours. In 2020, she was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in recognition of her outstanding services to music.

In 2023, she was awarded The King's Medal for Music, an award given annually to an outstanding individual or group of musicians who have had a major influence on the musical life of the nation.

She has sung at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg, and Tanglewood Festivals and the BBC Proms, where, in 2009, she was a soloist at Last Night. Opera engagements have taken her around the world, from the Metropolitan Opera to the Royal Opera House, the Paris Opera, La Scala Milan, the Vienna and Munich State Operas, and the Bayreuth, Glyndebourne, and Aix-en-Provence Festivals.

Highlights in her 2023/24 season include Mendelssohn's ***Elijah*** with the LSO/Sir Antonio Pappano; Tippett's ***A Child of our Time*** with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Sir Andrew Davis; Elgar's ***The Dream of Gerontius*** with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra/Nicholas Collon and orchestral songs by Alma Mahler-Werfel with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra/John Storgårds. She gives recitals at London's Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Seville's Espacio Turina, for the Fundació Victoria de los Ángeles in Barcelona and at the Leeds Lieder Festival with Joseph Middleton and at the Oxford Lieder Festival with Dame Imogen Cooper. In the opera house she returns to the

Festival Finale

Performers

Dutch National Opera as Jocaste in Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex. She creates the role of the eponymous heroine Zarqa in the world premiere of Lee Bradshaw's new opera *Zarqa al-Yamama* for the Arabia Opera in Riyadh.

Harry Bicket



Credit: Richard Haughton

Internationally renowned as an opera and concert conductor of distinction, Harry Bicket is especially noted for his interpretation of baroque and classical repertoire and,

since 2007, has been Artistic Director of The English Concert, one of Europe's finest period orchestras. In 2013, following regular guest appearances for Santa Fe Opera, he became their Chief Conductor and, in 2018, assumed the Music Directorship. In Santa Fe, he has led productions of Carmen, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Le nozze di Figaro, Fidelio, La Finta Giardiniera, Romeo et Juliette, Alcina, Candide and Cosi fan tutte. In the 2019 season, he also performed Strauss' Four Last Songs with Renee Fleming. Born in Liverpool, he studied at the Royal College of Music and Oxford University.

Projects with The English Concert in 2022/23, in addition to their London season and recording projects, included tours to Europe and the United States with Handel's Solomon and performances of Ariodante at the Palais Garnier. This season, Harry will also return to the Chicago Symphony for a special collaboration with the Joffrey Ballet, Orchestra of St Luke's, Canadian Opera Company (Le nozze di Figaro) and Santa Fe Opera.



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The English Concert

The English Concert is an outstanding orchestra: exceptional in the world-renowned quality, ambition and variety of its live and recorded output; unique in the zeal of its players for working and performing together; unwavering in its desire to connect with its audience throughout the world.

Under the artistic direction of Harry Bicket and principal guest conductor Kristian Bezuidenhout, The English Concert has earned a reputation for combining urgency, passion and fire with precision, delicacy and beauty.

The artistic partners we collaborate with reflect and enhance our pursuit of new ways to bring our music to life. Dame Sarah Connolly, Joyce

Di Donato, Iestyn Davies, Alison Balsom, Trevor Pinnock, Dominic Dromgoole, Tom Morris, and many more have not only contributed their extraordinary skills to individual projects but continue to help us shape the way we perform.

One cornerstone of the orchestra's annual cycle is its international Handel Opera tour. Blossoming from an ongoing relationship with Carnegie Hall, the itinerary now regularly takes in the Theater an der Wien, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Elbphilharmonie and Barbican Hall, and the roster of great halls continues to grow. Meanwhile, our regular London series allows us to explore a radically different path, presenting programmes to our home audience that challenge and inspire us.

Director/Harpsichord/Organ

Harry Bicket

Mezzo-soprano

Dame Sarah Connolly

Violin 1

Nadja Zwiener (leader)

Violin 2

Manami Mizumoto

Viola

Alfonso Leal del Ojo

Louise Hogan

Violoncello

Joseph Crouch

Double Bass

Giuseppe Ciraso-Cali

Oboe

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New Phase for the String Scheme

It is now 8 years since the Festival began supporting the String Scheme, as part of our strong charitable commitment to promoting the learning of music in schools. Launched back in 2012 by RGS Guildford, our involvement began four years later when we started funding the expansion of the existing scheme to Sandfield Primary School, with a further expansion to Boxgrove School made possible in 2018 through additional funding we secured from the Community Foundation of Surrey (CFS).

In the last year, the String Scheme has reached an important milestone. The multi-year grant from CFS reached its conclusion, but both Boxgrove and Sandfield Schools felt that the scheme had such value for their pupils that they were willing to part-fund the scheme. The Festival, with help from other charitable sources brokered by RGS Guildford, has been able to provide the funding to ensure the future of the scheme and the 'Continuers' Orchestra', allowing scheme 'graduands' to maintain their involvement beyond their first year of group tuition. The Continuers' Orchestra is now being hosted at Boxgrove School.

It was gratifying for Friends of the Festival to have Winifred Allum entertain them at their 2024 Winter Party in January (in her first public performance).

Winnie started on the violin in 2018 with the launch of the RGS String Scheme at Boxgrove Primary School and continued learning with Tim Callaghan. Winnie is currently studying violin with Lucy-Ellen Spencer, gaining a Distinction in the ABRSM grade 8 exam in 2022 at age 11, and she is now working towards the ABRSM Associate diploma. Her performance in the Under 18 Recital class of the 2022 Woking Festival was judged as Outstanding. Winnie enjoys solo and ensemble playing in a wide range of styles from folk to 20th century but is

especially drawn to the romantic repertoire. She is a fan of Two Set Violin!

Winnie was Leader of the String Scheme Continuers' Orchestra and the South West Surrey Youth Orchestra and is presently the principal 2nd violin with the Surrey County Youth Orchestra. For the past two years, she has been a National Children's Orchestra member. Winnie attends Guildford County School, where she plays with the Chamber Orchestra and is on the school Music Council.

Winnie plays an English violin made by Maurice Bouette, on loan from the Benslow Music Trust.

Winnie said of her start with the String scheme:

'Through the String Scheme, I discovered music making as my life's passion. I am very grateful to the scheme and glad so many other students have had the chance to learn an instrument and to play together.'



Winnie after performing the Bach Chaconne at the 2024 Friends' Winter party

Festival Who's Who

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Wu Qian, Artistic Director, and Tessa Marchington.

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With special thanks to

Tamsin Williams, Wigwam PR, Damaris Laker, Artium Media Relations, Jigsaw Events, Flippinimage, Georgia Lowe Design and Marketing, Richard Butler, programme notes, Phil Sumner, photography, Anna Levene, photography, The Arts Society, 2024 Publicity Partner, Guildford Book Festival, 2024 Publicity Partner, Guildford TIC, and all our volunteers led by Patricia Jubert and Anne Powell-Evans.

To find out how you can get more closely involved with the Festival, visit <https://shimf.co.uk/support> or use this QR code.



Keep the Music Playing

'Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.' – Plato

A life without music is quite simply unimaginable. Music inspires, comforts and connects people in all walks of life, and in all that we do here at the Festival, we aim both to nurture the musical life of our community and to support the performers who do so much to enrich our world. As a charity, we couldn't do this without the support of you, our much-valued audience members, and the additional financial contributions we receive each year from our Festival Friends, Individual Sponsors and Corporate Supporters. Their support enables us to plan ahead with confidence, book sought-after artists and secure use of the best venues the Surrey Hills have to offer.

We gratefully acknowledge all those who have given us their invaluable support during this 2024 season and warmly invite you to consider helping us to 'Keep the Music Playing' in 2025 and beyond.

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And if you would simply like to make a donation to support our plans for our sixteenth season in 2025, you can do so here <https://shimf.co.uk/donate> or use this QR code.



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