
LARK *music*

ISSUE 3

NOTES FROM

THE

HEART

Featuring Tasmin Little





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Welcome to our latest edition of LARKmusic 2016. We are so excited that our journey with London Sinfonietta is now in full flight and composer Deborah Pritchard has written a new piece of music for Lark Insurance Group.

The commission for solo violin is called Inside Colour and you can read about how Deborah, a synaesthetic composer, sees a certain colour when she hears a particular sound.

Virtuoso violinist Tasmin Little tells us how Yehudi Menuhin influenced her music and view on life. It is the grand maestro's centenary and I am delighted to confirm that Lark is supporting the Yehudi Menuhin 100th Competition.

We are sponsoring the Former Prizewinners' concert on April 11 and details about the talented young performers are on pages 10-11.

Talking of youth, violin dealer Florian Leonhard's mother, Christel, tells LARKmusic how her son's promising career rocketed after she made a spontaneous decision on his behalf!

On a serious note, the issue of The United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) rules often fills musicians with fear but violin maker Peter Beare has assisted Lark in creating a guide for musicians who are planning to travel overseas.

In turn, Bruno Guastalla, of Oxford Violins, makes a plea for musicians not to tamper with their stringed instruments.

We've got news on our former Lark Scholar, a new Out & About section and you can meet the Lark music team.

Please note that the music team has moved to the London office at Ibex House, 42-47 Minories, EC3N 1DY.

Lastly, don't forget to take a look at our improved website www.larkinsurance.co.uk

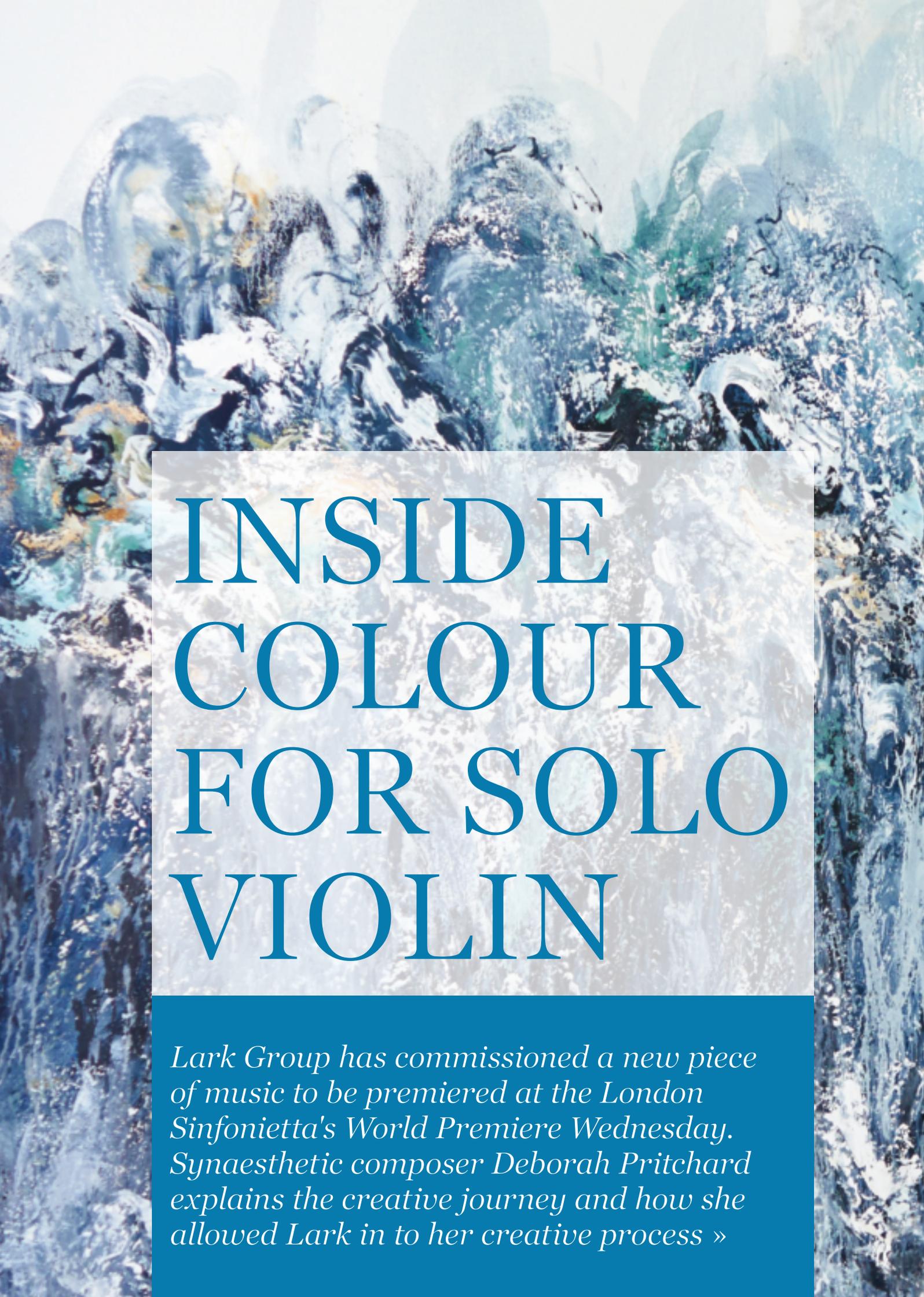
Best wishes,
Gemma Deavall
Divisional Director

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*Above: Gemma Deavall
Picture by Will Tisdall*

*Front cover: Tasmin Little
Picture by B. Ealovega*





INSIDE COLOUR FOR SOLO VIOLIN

Lark Group has commissioned a new piece of music to be premiered at the London Sinfonietta's World Premiere Wednesday. Synaesthetic composer Deborah Pritchard explains the creative journey and how she allowed Lark in to her creative process »





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Music is about being human and needs to mean something in order to resonate with a human soul. This was my starting point when writing my Sinfonietta Short, a new solo violin piece for Lark, with Lark supporting my vision and letting me be creatively free.

When Andrew Burke asked me to write the piece he explained that the project was ‘a bit different’ since it had been commissioned specifically by Lark and I was invited to their London office to meet the Private Clients’ directors.

I was immediately struck by their integrity and sensitivity to human beings. Both Managing Director David Foster and Director Julie Webb showed a great understanding of the arts and I was touched by their kindness and good spirit, and that was when the creative process started.

Talking to Julie along the way, showing her some of the creative process, was really unusual and I opened myself up to Lark, rather than just delivering a finished piece.

It has been a productive relationship where I have felt supported and in turn, I have shared my ideas.

I am a synaesthetic composer and respond to colour through music, often painting graphic sketches as I work. My new Sinfonietta Short for solo violin is called ‘Inside Colour’ and responds to the beautiful and mesmeric colours of the aurora, particularly when seen from space.

I was inspired by some footage from the International Space Station taken as it moved through the aurora with green light below and red above.

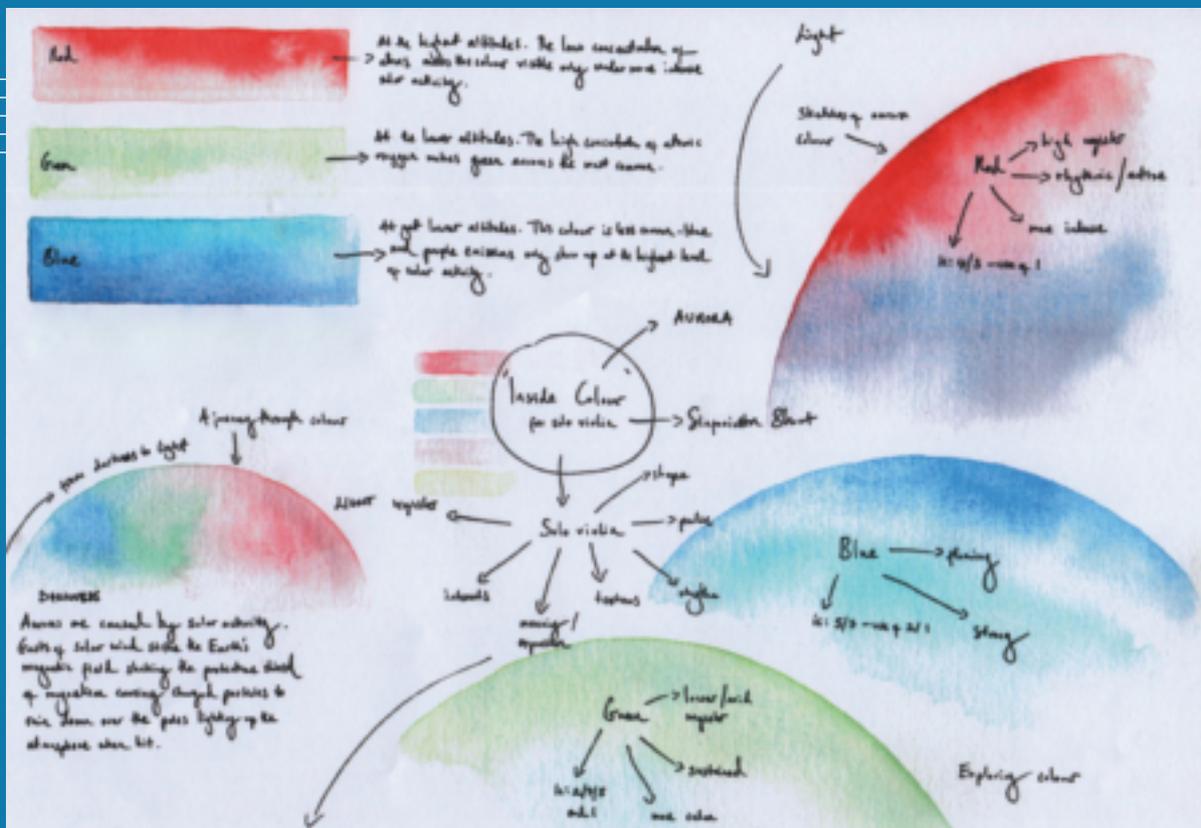
The aurora can take many forms that include a constantly transforming curtain-like shape or a calm and glowing arc, each with a different sense of pulse and resonance.

I have translated the colour, shape and movement of the aurora subjectively through varying musical parameters including harmony, timbre, rhythm and pulse - exploring the range of sounds found in the violin, creating a musical narrative that takes the listener above the earth on a journey through colour.

I began music relatively late compared to others, though I painted and loved colour from a very early age. I started playing double bass aged 12 and soon started to write music. I combined art and music for A-level but had no formal training in composing until my undergraduate degree. It has only really been in the last two or three years that I have come to understand true meaning in music. My father, who loved art, died in 2013 and from that moment I felt a profound sense of urgency in my work to realise my artistic vision.

Soon after I went to visit the contemporary artist and sculptor Maggi Hambling at her studio in Suffolk to start work on a violin concerto written in response to her series of 13 paintings Walls of Water. »

Picture:
Will Tisdall



Inside Colour: Deborah Pritchard's work has been inspired by footage from the International Space Station

Each painting shows a wave crashing against the sea wall, with a transforming range of colours as the seasons change throughout the year. My musical narrative was born from not only the strength and power of the sea but also the vivid journey from cold to warm colours and I was honoured that the work was performed at the National Gallery, London, in 2015 as Maggi exhibited.

Colours can be incredibly expressive, holding their own emotional energy and I am fascinated by the link between colour and music and how it can be developed in a meaningful and spiritual way.

Maggi told me that as a child she would talk to the sea but as she grew older she would listen to what it said to her. I grew up by the sea, in Hythe, near Folkestone, Kent and this resonated with me greatly.

Looking back on my childhood I can see how privileged I was to grow up by the sea, spending time on the beach with my family and being surrounded by inspiring views and landscape.

I've been greatly influenced by the Expressionist artist Wassily Kandinsky, particularly his book 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art' where he describes

yellow as 'bursting forth aimlessly in every direction'; red as having a 'determined power and intensity'; blue being a 'typically Heavenly colour' whilst white was of a world 'that is too far above us for its harmony to touch our souls'.

Colour is now crucial in my work and I often look to it first in order to understand the meaning and vision of the piece.

Lark has taken a great interest in this and in me as an artist. Rather than just commissioning the music, sitting back and waiting for something to happen they have supported and engaged with me, showing integrity and sensitivity to my creative process, making this composition 'Inside Colour' totally unique.



Inside Colour will be premiered at London Sinfonietta's World Premiere Wednesday at Hiscox, 1 Great St Helen's, London EC3A 6HX on March 23, at 8.30am

Hear more of Deborah

Deborah will be composer in residence at the Lichfield Festival this Summer and will receive world premieres from the Manchester Camerata and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, to be broadcast on BBC Radio 3. See details at lichfieldfestival.org

Her new work for trumpet soloist Simon Desbruslais and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales will be in response to the art of Kandinsky and will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Biography

Deborah Pritchard is a British composer broadcast by BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4 and released by NMC, Signum and Nimbus. In 2016 she will be premiered by the London Symphony Orchestra (Panufnik Scheme), London Sinfonietta, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Manchester Camerata and will be composer in residence at the Lichfield Festival. Deborah studied composition under Simon Bainbridge for her MMus Degree in Composition at the Royal Academy of Music and was awarded her DPhil from Worcester College, Oxford where she studied with Robert Saxton.



Read more about Deborah Pritchard's work at www.nmcrec.co.uk/composer/pritchard-deborah

Colour is a power that directly influences the soul. Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul – from Concerning the Spiritual in Art by Kandinsky



“Yehudi taught me the qualities a great human being can possess”

Even as a child, Tasmin Little understood she was in the presence of an exceptional human being when being taught by Yehudi Menuhin.

As a pupil at his London school she not only learned about music from the greatest of all teachers, but lessons for life.

Tasmin, who will be a judge at the Yehudi Menuhin 100th Competition, said: “Yehudi was inspirational; it didn’t matter if he was talking to royalty or an eight-year-old like me, he treated everyone with respect and dignity, encouraging them all the time.

“He was completely natural, never cross, and incredibly patient and understanding.

“He did not expect his pupils to be perfect, he just asked each of us to try our very best at all times. I learned that important lesson from him and still always work to the maximum.

“Yehudi not only taught me about the journey towards being a great musician, but also about the qualities that a great human being can possess.

“He was an extra special person, not just an extra special musician. As a child prodigy he travelled the world and he had audiences at his feet and yet he retained such dignity.

“He used his position to promote so many good things, from schools in London and Gstaad, Switzerland, to taking political action to bring people together.

“The Yehudi Menuhin Competition is an embodiment of Yehudi’s attributes - sharing ideas, music-making and learning.

“The competition is really a celebration, a gathering of judges who are some of the finest players in the world and talented young musicians who are about to embark on their journey.

“It is also one of the few violin competitions where jurors perform a concert and give a public masterclass - so everyone ‘rolls up their sleeves’.

“This is really important because with

every member of the jury performing, our neck is on the line, too. Chairman of the judges, Pamela Frank, has huge integrity and although the judges are top performers, it is clear we are not simply sitting on our pedestals.

“Again, this is in the spirit of Yehudi who hated bias in any form be it gender, race or politics.”

Five of the nine jurors are former prizewinners of the competition. Tasmin won third prize in the inaugural competition and second prize in 1985. The youngest juror is Ray Chen, who won the senior prize in 2008.

Tasmin said: “The first competition was held in Folkestone, Kent. It was highly regarded, although very different to now. It was, and still is, a wonderful platform for young musicians.

“It is the litmus test for young people - meeting the judges, gathering knowledge and a grand opportunity to network and receive feedback.

“We talk to every competitor, so everyone receives valuable feedback to make this competition positive in every way.”

Tasmin says that when she is judging she has one guiding rule. She said: “The competitor must move me. My heart rules my head so even if a musician is the greatest technician it is no good if they cannot touch the audience.

“There needs to be sensitivity and a happy marriage of being technically able while expressing »



“As a judge my heart rules my head so even if a musician is the greatest technician it is no good if they can not touch the audience”

what they feel- so it is powerful and with emotion. I do not want to hear a robot!

“I believe the other judges feel the same. Four years ago, when the competition was held in Beijing, the votes for the winner were unanimous. We didn’t discuss it, we just put down our selection.”

Tasmin says she is delighted by Lark Group’s support of the Junior Prizewinners’ Concert on April 11.

She said: “It is wonderful that Lark is sponsoring the Junior Prizewinners’ Concert, the journey of a young musician is a precarious

one and support is always needed and greatly appreciated!

“I am sure that everyone will enjoy a feast of excellent music-making that evening.”

David Foster, Lark Private Clients Director, said: “We are very proud to sponsor this concert which features prizewinners Kerson Leong and Rennosuke Fukuda, accompanied by Gordon Back on piano.

“It promises to be an evening of exceptional music and we at Lark Insurance Group are really to proud be involved in the Yehudi Menuhin centenary.”



Rennosuke Fukada with the Cleveland Orchestra



The Lark Insurance Junior Prizewinners' Concert will feature Kerson Leong

Picture: Bruno Schlumberger

HHRH The Prince of Wales is Patron of the 11-day Menuhin Competition, the world's leading competition for young violinists which will include concerts and events at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) and venues across London.

The 44 competitors, all under the age of 22, will fly in from across the globe and many of the participants and prizewinners go on to become international soloists.

The Lark Insurance Junior Prizewinners' Concert will take place in the RAM's Duke's Hall, on Monday, April 11 at 7.30pm.

The concert will feature two former winners of the Junior competition; Kerson Leong, 19, from Canada, who won in Oslo in 2010, and Rennosuke Fukuda, 16, from Japan, who won in Austin, Texas, in 2014.

Kerson told Lark Group that he is really looking forward to experiencing the atmosphere which he enjoyed so much in 2010. He said: "The competition was so vibrant and positive with a real sense of camaraderie as everyone came together for the music."

Kerson, who started playing the violin at the age of four said: "I don't exactly remember how I started

but I love the intrinsic sound of the violin. My family is very musical - my mom is a pianist, my dad is a music lover and my brother is a musician!"

Rennosuke Fukahada has been described by The Violin Channel as "quickly building an international reputation as a young virtuoso of outstanding potential". He now studies under professors Pavel Vernikov and Svetlana Makarova in Sion, Switzerland.



The competition runs from April 7-17, 2016.
For details visit menuhincompetition.org
or ram.ac.uk

Journeys with a violin

A new exhibition, Yehudi Menuhin: Journeys with a violin, is open to the public at the RAM until November 30.

It marks Menuhin's birth on April 22, 2016 and traces his intellectual and geographical travels to explore how he added conductor, curator, school founder, philanthropist, and social commentator to his never-ending repertoire of activities.

“Florian thinks with his hands”

Florian Leonhard is a violin maker with a meticulous attention to detail but he has his mother to thank for a moment of spontaneity that shaped his career

Florian Leonhard’s grandfather was a scientist and as a youngster Florian thought he would follow a path into research and medicine.

His parents, Leo and Christel Leonhard, felt their son would be better suited to a career where he could combine his creative flair and obsessive attention to detail but they left him to discover that path.

The Leonhards, who lived in Dusseldorf, were a family who loved music, arts and theatre. Leo was a painter and later a professor in drawing and graphics, while Christel played the violin.

The family would join friends for musical recitals in their homes and Christel played violin in a quartet.

When Christel took her violin for repair, the violin maker noticed Florian scrutinising the instruments, trying to work out how they were made.

Christel said: “At the end of our visit he gave Florian a piece of wood and said ‘try to make the base of a violin’. When we returned to collect mine, Florian took along his first try and the violin maker was taken aback that he had managed to do it.

“Leo and I recognised his talent but it was not only that – if Florian made anything that was not quite perfect he would repeat it a second, third and a fourth time until it was right.

This was a quality he needed to develop real craftsmanship.

“He also inherited his father’s natural drawing skills and that was important in the violin school. He certainly had the assets for this profession.

“Leo would say ‘Florian thinks with his hands’ and over the breakfast table one day he suggested he might like to consider violin making as a career.

“That was it. Florian applied for the Mittelwald School of Violin Making and practised and practised to get in. He was one of 12 chosen from more than 1,000.”

Florian found there was only one other student who was ahead of him at the start of the course. The boy’s father was a violin maker so he was more experienced and faster so Florian worked late into the evenings to perfect the skills and precision needed to be a fine violin maker.

As part of the course the students went into the forest to collect wood to learn how to source wood and how to select the right materials.

Christel says she was surprised at how her son took to learning the business side of the course as ‘nobody else in the family was business-minded’.

She said: “When Florian had to demonstrate management of a workshop and dealing with finances he threw himself into it. He was a natural.

“In his last year, he told me he did not want to stay in Germany to work in a backwater workshop but wanted to work with the best violin makers, to learn more from them. >>



Florian Leonhard with his mother Christel



*Florian Leonhard is development committee chairman and a Menuhin Competition sponsor
Picture: Will Tisdall*

“He told me W.E. Hill & Sons were the best in the world so I said ‘why don’t we go there?’.

“We jumped on a plane and went to England. I didn’t think a lot, I had good feeling about it and I suppose we were young and unsophisticated back then!”

Christel and Florian travelled to Havenfields, in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire where W.E. Hill had moved premises from London.

Christel said: “It was an adventure and we found this wonderful place, a manor house set in parkland and a beautiful workshop. There was even a railway in the grounds!”

“It was in the sticks, but I knew Florian would love it there. His grandparents lived in Alsfeld, a charming medieval town and we spent our summer holidays there walking in the hills.

“It is a magical, romantic place where there are more than 400 half-timbered houses - perhaps Florian’s early interest to maintain and renovate came from there!”

“Anyway, Florian showed Andrew Hill his work and they struck up an easy conversation. At the end of it, Mr Andrew, as he was called, said ‘yes you can come to work here’.

“I didn’t believe it. I asked whether we should make a contract and he said ‘no, we will shake hands on it’. It was a gentlemen’s agreement.”

Christel said when they returned to Germany, Florian could hardly believe it so he wrote to Mr Andrew to thank him. He wrote and re-

wrote the letter half a dozen times before he was happy to send it.

Andrew Hill later visited the Mittelwald school. Christel said: “In the workshops everyone wore those green aprons so I took Florian out to buy a white linen shirt so he looked smart!”

Florian moved to the W.E. Hill & Sons’ workshop in 1985 and although he was in the countryside he spent his weekends exploring London and its theatres and museums.

He became head restorer from 1987-1989 and eventually set up his own business in 1995.

Although Florian has been making violins for 34 years it was only five years ago that he felt that they were good enough to sell.

Christel said: “For Florian, studying violins is like forensic science. Choosing the correct piece of wood is the most difficult thing to learn. He is always on the look out for the best quality and he chooses it by instinct for flexibility and strength, so the sound will be absolutely right.”



Florian Leonhard is chairman of the development committee and a sponsor of the Yehudi Menuhin 100th Competition. This year he is celebrating the 21st anniversary of Florian Leonhard Violins. He has also been responsible for helping former Lark Scholar Joe Devalle secure a violin through The Stradivari Trust. See page 19



Get yourself certified

Lark receives many questions from musicians about travelling overseas with instruments and bows. Concern over CITES is often raised so we asked distinguished violin maker Peter Beare to help clarify the matter

It is shocking to think that elephants in the wild could be extinct within two decades.

That's the message from wildlife organisations because, despite a worldwide ban on the use of ivory, it has not stopped the illegal trade and tens of thousands of elephants are being killed by poachers every year.

The United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) protects around 5,000 animal species and 29,000 plant species against over-exploitation through international trade.

Stringed instrument bows which have tips and frogs made from ivory can fall foul of CITES restrictions and musicians run the risk of having their bows confiscated or even destroyed if they do not have a Musical Instrument Certificate (MIC).

Interestingly, many modern instruments are being made with mammoth ivory. Although the

mammals have been extinct for several thousand years, large amounts of their ivory is now being excavated in Siberia.

Mammoth ivory is not on the CITES list but while this is an environmentally friendly approach, it is now problematic because customs officials find it difficult to tell it apart from elephant ivory.

Violin maker Peter Beare, past president of the 170-member association Entente Internationale des Luthiers et Archetiers (EILA) who is based in Kent, said: "At the moment, players should be fine with ivory on a bow if they have obtained a MIC (which is possible for ivory providing it dates from before 1976, when ivory was CITES listed). However, if they have mammoth ivory, they should get their bow maker to clarify this as customs' officials cannot tell the difference and mammoth ivory is not CITES-listed."

Peter said: "There has been a great deal of confusion over whether musicians can travel with

instruments or bows that contain ivory but if a musician has a Musical Instrument Certificate (MIC) and checks in advance with the country they wish to enter there should not be a problem. It's as simple as that."

Some musicians are getting ivory replaced on their bows when this is not necessary.

Wood used for instruments and bows can also fall under CITES control, in particular Brazilian rosewood, which like ivory, is CITES appendix I listed.

Peter added: "US customs will not currently accept MICs for bows with the other listed materials such as whalebone, tortoiseshell and lizard skin, but we hope that international harmonisation will lead to them being accepted in the near future.

"As to ebony and Pernambuco (a Brazilian tree in the pea family, used to make bow sticks) the CITES appendix II listing is now restricted to raw and sawn logs, plus veneers. Finished products such as bow sticks, frogs and fingerboards are exempt from CITES regulations and can cross borders without the need for a permit, unless any country introduced its own stricter measures.

"Anyone stopped at customs with such finished products should point out the exemption and the CITES website cites.org has all current information on listings.

"However, some makers and dealers have been producing a document of their own for customers, listing every species used in the bow or instrument, noting whether each has a CITES status or not, and this has facilitated travel for some. It is a pity that it has got to this situation.

"There is not a guarantee that a MIC will be automatically accepted.

"Any country is free to impose its own regulations that are stricter than those of CITES (the UK does, but not for any species used in our industry) and that is why it is advisable for musicians to check with any country before they travel there.

"But we're working on it. Any pressure musicians can apply in their countries would be helpful. Live Performance Europe (PEARLE) is doing this but the more the merrier, and it is the musicians themselves who will lose or benefit.

"Getting the MIC universally accepted should be everyone's goal."

At present there is no cost involved for a UK MIC but owners need to ensure they have one MIC for each instrument.



The MIC can be obtained by going to www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-import-and-export-permit

Orchestral manoeuvres

Germany and Austria are pushing to make things easier for musicians (and CITES and customs) by removing the reference to "personally owned" in the TEC (Travelling Exhibition Certificate).

Peter Beare says this would make it possible for orchestras to apply for a TEC that would cover their members' instruments and bows.

He added: "They also wish to change the rules regarding border controls, so that the MIC need only be shown on request and the obligatory validation of the passport with a stamp would be cancelled.

"I have spoken to the UK CITES and they agree these changes would be very good, so will support them at forthcoming CITES meetings."



With thanks to Peter Beare:
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Bruno Guastalla in his Oxford workshop
Picture: Peter David Grant/peterdavidgrant.com

The unstoppable march of time

A plea for minimal and appropriate repair and restoration by Bruno Guastalla of Oxford Violins

Whether players, collectors, or restorers, we can only marvel at the fact that our beloved, fragile boxes last so well.

In speaking about the march of time, it might be worth mentioning an instrument I am fond of, a Brothers Amati violin of 1603, formerly in the collection of Albert Cooper, which was used by Emanuel Hurwitz during his career.

Although it shows signs of use, its structural strength and wholesome design, its bold marriage of gutsiness, intensity and refinement, are still there to see and, most importantly, to hear.

For me it holds a magic in itself, as a superb development on their father Andrea's ideas, but also because I can see the architecture and know-how drawn on later by Stradivari and the

Guarneri family during the following 150 years.

To quote the late Koen Padding, luthier and researcher on antique varnishes: "For many luthiers, the maintenance, repair and restoration of classical instruments between 250 and 450 years old is an everyday reality.

"The visual and tonal beauty of these instruments commands our attentions so irresistibly that a small miracle – the actual survival of these instruments, despite centuries of rigorous use – tends to go unnoticed."

If we compare violins from Stradivari's output, such as the exceptionally crisp 'Lady Blunt' of 1721 with others from the same period, looking at the patina, we can witness the cumulative effect of use upon a musical instrument.

We can love the freshness of one and the delicious variety of others in equal measure.

Yet we would be missing the point thinking these objects are frozen in time in their current state. As players or restorers, we play an inescapably significant part in their history.

With few exceptions, all repairs and restorations (including disfiguring interventions) are deemed necessary and justified at the time. For example, the cutting down and enlarging of old violas and cellos in the 19th and 20th centuries might raise eyebrows now, but as part of a movement towards standardisation of size and shape, it made sense at the time.

Thinking of disfigurement, I must mention the French polishing by which many fine and rare old instruments have been covered in a glassy coating of hard shellac by restorers at the demand of their clients. It is a highly destructive and unnecessary practice which unfortunately continues to this day, entirely motivated by a fashion for high gloss.

There is a paradox, which is that the very survival of 17th and 18th century instruments was due to later interventions and modifications: neck and bass-bar replacements were integral parts of a change in musical practice during the late 18th century.

The last 50 years have seen a welcome change in attitude. A spirit of openness has started to prevail: restoration workshops, researchers, dealers, luthiers, historians, scientists and some museum conservators have shared a great deal more, and the secrecy which was the norm has lost some of its dubious appeal.

In the field of restoration, where one used to be limited to handed-down formulaic approaches, more specific and appropriate techniques can now be devised for each situation through dialogue with peers.

The culture surrounding classical violin-making has developed considerably, thanks to schools, apprenticeships and professional associations, and also to a host of researchers whose spirit of investigation, insight and enthusiasm eventually find their way onto the pages of many books. Though of course expertise in any field is a life-long, active, open-ended, individual (and collective) process; what can be found in books is only a part of it.

Going back to my plea, practically, how might 'minimal and appropriate' translate into action? As a restorer I always need to remember that any work I do will become part of the instrument's history, as well as being a

response to an urgent problem which client and luthier are attempting to address. All actions have consequences.

While this can be discussed through dialogue between client and restorer, it also involves insurance companies in the case of accidental damage. One example: there is a valid argument that instruments are taken apart more often than necessary for repairing short accident-related cracks. However careful one is, there is always risk involved in prizing the delicate belly from the ribs.

A well-planned and rehearsed crack repair from the outside, if the crack is not under too much pressure, can sometimes be sufficient, even if not secured on the inside. As animal glue is used, the repair will be (relatively) reversible, so should it fail after a few years, other options would need to be considered, but only if and then.

I can see this could be fraught for a variety of reasons: luthiers do want to guarantee their work and why would an insurance company pay for something with a slight caveat attached, or indeed why would a player add, even if only a smidgen, to their burden of anxiety? As you can see, this is not quite as straightforward as it might seem!

A strange, mixed sort of a privilege comes from having done this work for quite a while, as I am able both to remember what

an instrument looked like 35 years ago and witness what it looks like now. This is true of my own making, as instruments, like children, come back home occasionally. In the case of old instruments, even the gentlest of cleaning once every year or so, ends up aggregating in the form of a slight softening of the surface of the varnish.

Given that the march of time is unstoppable, bringing awareness of it to our works and transactions when it comes to repair and restoration, seems like a good idea if we wish to continue to enjoy these precious tools of music for a bit longer.

“ As a restorer
I always need to
remember that
any work I do will
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the instrument's
history ”



Thanks to Bruno Guastalla
of Oxford Violins
Visit oxfordviolins.com or
email: scroll@oxfordviolins.com
Telephone: 01865 556558

Caring for your instrument

For many musicians their instruments are their livelihood and they can also hold great sentimental value. Account handler Fay Watts offers advice on the best way to protect them

Tips for travelling

- Keep the instrument in a hard protective case.
- If the instrument has to go in the hold ask the airline to place it in the valuable cargo area of a plane (if this option is available).
- Add a FRAGILE sticker and inform the airline you are carrying a delicate instrument.
- Lower tension on the strings to the next level.
- Place a yellow duster or similar cloth under the bridge and tailpiece.
- If possible, place the instrument in a further box with bubble wrap so it does not move.
- Take your schedule of performances and policy certificate as Customs officials may require proof of ownership.
- When leaving an instrument in a vehicle (unattended vehicles coverage is available to buy back); keep it out of sight, for example put it in the boot.
- Lock the car at all times, even on stops such as paying for petrol or posting a letter.
- If leaving the vehicle unattended at night park it a well-lit area.
- Always opt for unattended vehicles cover for your instrument, this is available to 'buy back' at an additional premium.
- Alternatively, if using a bicycle or moped make sure the instrument is strapped to your back like a backpack or strapped on the back of the bike and it is kept in a hard/protective case.

Protect against damage

- Never leave your instrument next to a radiator, light or direct source of heat.

- Do not over clean your instrument.
- When you take a break from practising, place the instrument in a secure position.

Defend against theft

- Never leave valuable items lying around and always keep them in your line of sight.
- Do not advertise the value of your instrument by telling people and be careful who can overhear your conversation if you have to disclose its worth.
- Accompany your instrument at all times and never lend it to someone you do not trust.
- When left in your home, always make sure the property is fully secured and the instrument is not visible through windows.
- Whenever possible, lock away the instrument in a cupboard or room.
- Be aware of who is around you when walking or travelling with your instrument at night.
- When staying at a hotel, ask the manager to place the instrument in the principal safe or strong room rather than leaving it in your room. If it is not an option, place it out of sight in your room.



For information on what your policy covers or to make a claim, please call Fay Watts on 0203 846 5255 or email fay.watts@larkinsurance.co.uk

The Lark music team is based at Ibex House, 42-47 Minories, London EC3N 1DY



A real blessing

Picture: Will Tisdall

Lark Group's first Music Scholar Joseph Devalle secures a Guarneri violin through The Stradivari Trust

Regular readers of LARKmusic will be pleased to hear that Joseph Devalle, Lark's first Music Scholar, has secured a violin through The Stradivari Trust.

The 18th century Anselmo Bellosio instrument also comes with quite a story.

Last year, London violin dealer Florian Leonhard received a call from Cologne, Germany. A retiree had decided to sell what he thought was a Guarneri violin which had been owned by violinist and composer Franz Ries.

Florian met the seller but as soon as he opened the violin case he could see that the instrument was made by Anselmo Bellosio, a Venetian contemporary of the grand maestro Guarneri.

He bought the violin and when Lark and The Stradivari Trust asked if he could help source a violin for Joseph he suggested that the Bellosio might be suitable.

Florian said: "It is just like a Guarneri; it has depth, warmth, ease of response, brilliance and the power a violinist like Joseph needs – otherwise he would be struggling to reach his potential."

This ended a nine-months search where Joseph had used plenty of shoe leather, meeting violin dealers across the UK, while searching for the right instrument. He said: "Florian had seen me play at a couple of Lark-supported music events at the RCM so that was really helpful.

"I was allowed to try the violin for a few days,

to ensure it was right for me. I had a strong feeling about the power it could project and how comfortable it was - but there was something else that was forcing me to play better.

"This violin suddenly gave me more scope for different colours and sounds. I knew I could achieve more with it and thought I would have to play better to make the most of the opportunities."

The Stradivari Trust is now in the process of raising the investment, which includes an investment from Lark, and a 20-year individual trust will be set up for Joseph.

Joseph, who completed his Master's in Performance at the Royal College of Music (RCM) last summer, now has a one-year contract with the Komische Oper Berlin.

He said: "This was a wonderful opportunity because when you finish your studies everything is up in the air; your work and your finances. It is a huge responsibility, effectively a mortgage so the help and advice from Lark has been invaluable.

"I must single out Lark Private Clients Director David Foster. I am no longer a student but his support has gone beyond the contracted role. Through David, Lark encouraged The Stradivari Trust to make this happen.

"The move from studying to becoming a professional is a difficult process for musicians, so to have people on your side, such as when you need an instrument, has been a real blessing."



Team talk: From left, Fay Watts, Jessica Nash, Poppy Ewence, Rebecca Edwards, Claire Sanders, Emma Johnson, Beverly Luxton, Gemma Deavall and Louise Deacon. Inset, Tracy Reynolds

Meet the music team

By Gemma Deavall, Divisional Director

The Lark Music team is dedicated to providing made to measure insurance solutions for all clients in the music world from students, musicians, collectors, orchestras and luthiers.

We understand that the relationship between a musician and their instrument is a special one – and something that should be protected.

Our specialist musical instrument policy acknowledges that bond and, importantly, offers a cash settlement in the event of an instrument needing to be replaced because we realise a musician cannot simply buy exactly the same one.

In the event of repairs being required, we are happy for clients to use their own trusted repairer.

The Lark Music policy responds to musicians' unique needs and we have established ourselves as one of the leading musical instrument insurance brokers in the world. We also understand the hectic lifestyle of a touring musician and we provide worldwide cover for clients who need to travel with their instruments.

I am passionate about developing my growing music team, and the book of music business, so please meet the ladies:

Manager Louise Deacon

Louise has been newly promoted and has risen through the ranks since joining Lark in 2007. She is responsible for a

large portfolio of clients and holds the CERT CII. She is now working towards her Diploma in insurance. When she's not at work she's watching bands or working out in the gym.

Musical tastes: Band - The Foals; Album - Holy Fire by The Foals, Song - Spanish Sahara by The Foals.

Get the picture?

louise.deacon@larkinsurance.co.uk

Senior Account Executive Claire Sanders

Claire marks her 21st year with Lark in 2016. She is a specialist in placing high net worth risks and is there anyone who Claire doesn't know in the violin world?

Claire is the team's 'arty one' and despite her modesty she really can put paint on canvas and on her newly acquired summerhouse!

Musical tastes: Alternative - Empire of the Sun, particularly Walking on a Dream, Temper Trap and Imagine Dragons.

For easy listening it's Ellie Goulding.

claire.sanders@larkinsurance.co.uk

Account Handler Fay Watts

Animal-loving, gym/spin-loving, piercing-loving Fay loves to be busy! She joined Lark in 2008 and now has a large portfolio of clients, specialising in US and Australian business and claims. Fays holds the CERT CII and is now working towards her Diploma.

Musical tastes: Slipknot's album Iowa, she says, shaped her taste in music and also shaped who she is today.

Wow!

fay.watts@larkinsurance.co.uk



Pictures: Peter Seaman

... and we even share our musical guilty pleasures

Account Handler Emma Johnson

Emma is our all-seeing, all-caring team member who takes the juniors under her wing. She has worked for Lark Group for 17 years and specialises in new business. She is responsible for a large portfolio of clients and loves a project, whatever the challenges.

Musical tastes: Album - The Weeknd (that's the correct spelling!).

Favourite bands: Friendly Fires and Two Door Cinema - Emma's seen both bands live.

emma.johnson@larkinsurance.co.uk

Trainee Account Handler Rebecca Edwards

Flute-playing Rebecca is the youngest member of our team but she's learning fast and taking on more and more work. We love that.

Favourite album: Jess Glynne, I Cry When I Laugh.

Favourite band: S Club 7.

rebecca.edwards@larkinsurance.co.uk

Trainee Account Handler Poppy Ewence

RCM graduate Poppy is the newest member of our talented team and brings with her a huge knowledge of the music world. She also plays the oboe! Poppy is always out and about at Lark events from the London Sinfonietta to the RCM.

Musical tastes: Coldplay X&Y - the songs are 'timeless' and Chris Martin is a great musician and performer'.

Favourite band: Editors, not least because Poppy's friend is the synth/keys player.

poppy.ewence@larkinsurance.co.uk

Assistant Client Handler Tracy Reynolds

Favourite music: Kiss by Prince - 'it makes me want to dance'.

Best album: Gabriel's greatest hits

tracy.reynolds@larkinsurance.co.uk

Administrative Assistant Beverly Luxton

Favourite band: The Beatles - 'I love their ballads'.

Best song: Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen. Bev says

'whenever we have get-togethers we always sing this'.

Administrative Assistant Jessica Nash

Favourite album: Justin Bieber's album - 'they're mostly good songs and you don't have to skip a lot!'

Favourite artist: Jess says she likes many different musicians but probably The Spice Girls or Beyoncé are 'the best'.



Divisional Director Gemma Deavall

"As for me, I have been working for Lark since 2000. I am proud to be responsible for the music team and their development.

"The team would not let me get away without sharing favourite music - and it has to be Nessun Dorma.

At my wedding breakfast last year we enjoyed a performance by the 'three waiters'. It was lovely to see our friends and family so moved by this piece of music. It will always make me smile!"



Out & About

with Claire Sanders

Senior Account Executive

The Lark Music team has been busy attending music events across the UK and Europe so here's a few snippets about our activities and we look forward to a lively programme in 2016.

BVMA Anniversary, Newark

We were very happy to support the British Violin Making Association (BVMA) 20th anniversary celebration.

It's a small market town lined with historic buildings and a castle ruin and home to the violin makers college where many of the BVMA members learned their trade.

Emma Johnson, Fay Watts and I put up a stand at the town hall and enjoyed meeting many of our insured and new clients who were attending technical talks.

In the evening, the gala dinner was great fun and when the live band started to play everyone let their hair down!

On Sunday, exhibitions included a collection of makers' business cards dating from the 1700s and demonstrations in making instruments and bows - even making a head of a bow blindfolded!

Mondomusica, Cremona



Mondomusica, in Cremona, Italy, attracts more than 15,300 visitors over three days and it is considered the leading specialist trade show for stringed instruments as well as associated items such as cases, wood, tools, pegs, bows and strings.

Fay and Emma set up the Lark stand that we exhibited with violin dealer Florian Leonhard so this gave us a chance to speak to clients while viewing Florian's stand.

We hosted a Lark Party at the Palazzo Trecchi and it was a special celebration marking Florian's 20 years in the business. The guest list included our dealers, makers and clients from all around the world.

Some 160 guests turned up - the jazz band played, the food and drink was in abundance and it was great to meet existing clients and new acquaintances. I also met Bruce Carlson whose shop, Carlson and Neumann, is well-established and a hub of activity.

We also attended Eric Blot's party. He has his premises in Cremona and everyone in the business attends. We came away knowing the Lark name is well-established and musicians and dealers were keen to meet us.

Amati, London

We hosted a stand at The Langham Hotel and found ourselves busy with new and current clients. Hosts Jamie and Sarah Buchanan always make us feel welcome and offer support in any way they can. On the Sunday evening Roby Lakatos performed with guest soloist Tamsin Waley Cohen - he really does set the house on fire.

One enchanting evening

A golden glow from the Royal Albert Hall lit up the Royal College of Music's Parry Rooms, in South Kensington, where students led by Lark Scholar Alexandra Lomeiko treated Lark guests to an intimate concert. Violinist Alexandra, accompanied by Abtibuba Suhanova on piano, opened the programme with sonatas by Brahms and Beethoven, plus Tchaikovsky's Meditation. Lovely!

Tasmin Little, Wigmore Hall

We loved meeting our clients at this wonderful event that warmed up a winter evening. We also met the London Philharmonic Orchestra backstage and the Endellion Quartet on the same night!



If you are interested in joining a Lark music event including the Steve Reich masterclass, music at the Westbury Hotel and a Callum Smart concert to name a few, email me at claire.sanders@larkinsurance.co.uk



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