

LARK *music*

ISSUE 6

GIFT OF EDUCATION

Featuring Martin James Bartlett

What's Inside

Cover Story

4-7



Taught by the best

Martin James Bartlett says he has learned from the greatest musicians and feels a responsibility to pass on his knowledge (Cover and inside images by Jeff Fuidge)

12-15



Trust your luck

Distinguished violinist György Pauk is one of London Sinfonietta's greatest fans and he talks about the city's exciting music scene in the 1960s

8-11



50 years young

It's a celebration and Lark Music is proud to co-sponsor the London Sinfonietta's 50th Anniversary Concert

20-22



Magical debut

Cellist Jamal Aliyev's rendition of Sayuri's Theme from the film Memories of a Geisha stole the audience's hearts at the BBC Proms

Welcome

The Gift of Education is cherished by the musicians featured in this edition of LARKmusic. In our cover story pianist Martin James Bartlett reveals his thoughts on teaching; cellist Jamal Aliyev tells us how sponsorship has given him so many opportunities and distinguished violinist György Pauk talks about his fascinating musical journey.

2017 was a fantastic year not only for the music division but also for our overall business as we merged with the Aston Scott Group. This will create one of the UK's leading, privately owned insurance brokers and employee benefit practices.

Aston Scott and Lark both have a rich heritage and combining the businesses represents a transformational opportunity for our clients and staff. It will be very much business as usual and you will continue to deal with the same people, with the same passion and love for music.

While Brexit remains a divisive issue in the UK, Lark remains thoroughly committed to its clients and friends based in Europe. It's in all of our interests for the UK to maintain strong ties with Europe, and this includes being able to trade effectively. We are busy working on our post-Brexit solutions and will keep you posted.

We will also be contacting you shortly with more information regarding our merger but in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Gemma

Gemma Deavall
Divisional Director
gemma.deavall@larkinsurance.co.uk



24-26

Starting early

Lark Music Early Years bursaries, for children up to five years at The Conservatoire, Blackheath, are probably the first of their kind in the UK



18-19

Musical Notes

Private Client Director Julie Webb shares her news; meeting clients and musicians while attending concerts, recitals and visiting the V&A



27-29

Music in Art

Our guest writer, art dealer and historian Angus Haldane, discusses musical imagery from the Old Masters to 20th century Mondrian



30

Out & About

Isabella Valentini has been running, singing – and flying to Lake Annecy – as well as returning to Cremona, in Italy, for the annual Mondomusica event



My BIG Five

Charismatic Martin James Bartlett is poised for a stellar career as a solo concert pianist and he tells Lark Private Client Director Julie Webb about his Big Five musical ambitions

Pianist Martin James Bartlett has become a great friend of Lark Insurance, playing at several Lark-supported events at the Royal College of Music and wowing guests with his artistry at the piano.

He is also blessed with a cheeky charm and wit that will carry him far. He talks 19 to the dozen about the piano but also has another great appetite – for food.

The BBC Young Musician of the Year 2014 is off to Japan in February to play at the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, his biggest recital so far, so the foodie fan will no doubt also revel in the cuisine as well as the cultural delights.

Martin loves to cook and says he is always in the kitchen – his top treat is comfort food. “Hearty French stews and pasta dishes are just the best,” he says.

Back to the music, at the age of 21, Martin says he has a Big Five when it comes to career ambitions; to study for his Masters before taking on the world; to release a debut CD; enjoy

more TV and radio coverage; pass on his knowledge by teaching and, the ultimate for a concert pianist, to own a Steinway piano.

Martin said: “My plan is to stay at RCM for two more years before travelling to reach wider audiences.

“I would love to play in South Korea where the average age of an audience there is 20. So many teenagers enjoy classical music because there is a heavy influence on culture and music from an early age. That’s really exciting.”

Releasing a debut CD is not so far off and Martin is in talks with a major record label with a view to record the music later this year.

He has also been invited to play in a BBC Young Musician of the Year concert in July. Martin said: “It is an anniversary special, celebrating 40 years of the competition and it will be wonderful to play alongside former winners. More exciting details are still coming through but it will be amazing to be part of the celebration.”

Despite an already busy schedule,

Martin revealed why he also wants to teach – because he feels ‘a deep responsibility’ to pass on the knowledge he has reaped from his piano teachers.

He said: “I have had the privilege to learn from the greatest teachers and I want to be able to pass on the skills.

“I’d love to teach at the RCM but not so much that I could not have a full-time performing career. I want to be playing but if, for instance, I had a few students, for a few hours a week, that would be ideal.

“I got so much from my teacher Emily Jeffrey. She is the greatest musician I have ever met and has passed on a huge amount to me. It should be my responsibility to try to pass that on to others. It would be selfish if I didn’t.

“Every Saturday, from the age of seven to 17, my mum and dad took me to the RCM for chamber music and choir sessions.

“My mum loved Emily Jeffrey – she is so dedicated – and before the BBC Young Musician competition we worked together until one or two in the morning. She has made me.

“Although I practised every Saturday, she said ‘let’s ramp it up, why not come to Purcell then we can have time there as well as the RCM’, so that’s what I did during my last years at secondary school.”

Martin explained that he wasn’t an early starter when it came to ▶

“My mum loved Emily Jeffrey – she is so dedicated – and before the BBC Young Musician competition we worked together until one or two in the morning”





► taking up the piano. His talent only began to surface when he was seven years old.

He said: “My mother Hazel is a piano teacher but, when she first began to teach me at the age of five, I was unfocused and quite a nightmare.

“We stopped, totally. She said ‘we’ll start when you have a better attention span’.

“When I went to school, sports were never my forte but I began to enjoy music, so every night after school I began to practise – piano, recorder and bassoon.

“After that I was never really interested in much else.

“My mother put me forward for an audition at the Royal College of

6 *At 13, I stopped playing and wanted to be a marine biologist* 9

Music when I was eight.

“We got to Grade 5 in a year – we went quickly, but she was also very careful about how we were doing it.

“I think she took me along just to see how I would fare but after I played for the Director of the RCM’s Junior Department Peter Hewitt, he said

‘Yes, you’ve got to come here’.

“The RCM was a leap of faith and Piano Professor Emily Jeffrey helped me achieve things I never dreamed I could. Apart from my mother she has been the greatest inspiration in my life.”

Despite the great influences, Martin’s path was not all plain sailing and at one point, when Martin was 13, he stopped playing for a year because he decided he wanted to be a marine biologist.

He said: “I suppose it was a teenage thing but Emily was cleverly persuasive. She said ‘you can do what you want, God has given you this gift but if you choose to waste it that’s fine’. She got me – and I haven’t looked back.” ►



Pictures of Martin James Bartlett by Jeff Fuidge

Fast-forward to 2018, Martin is now an undergraduate at the RCM with Head of Keyboard Vanessa Lata arche.

He said: "I feel so lucky continuing my musical development under such inspirational guidance from Vanessa."

Alongside his piano lessons Martin is also immersing himself in advanced stylist studies such as 'how Bach wrote his preludes and fugues and imitating the style ourselves'.

Martin said: "The difficulty with Bach is that when studying his work there are so many different, correct ways of actually notating the music because, at the time, it was never written to be studied or analysed.

"Music is a living art, you have to strike a fine balance between playing what you believe the composer wanted and intended, and also being true to what you feel about it.

"Every great artist has their own sound, although you might not always like the sound. Vladimir Horowitz, on occasion, had a quite nasal, slightly metallic sound on the piano.

"When it comes to developing your ear, I would like to think I could do a blind tasting on various pianists and differentiate their individual sounds.

"The importance of playing is finding individuality without destroying the original intention.

"Every great musician knows how they want to play every single note of every single piece of music or they have the intention to do so – if they don't know, it won't sound spontaneous."

As for Martin's dream to own a concert piano, Lark Insurance is hoping to help by supporting a private concert evening in the spring. All proceeds from each of the 88 tickets – one for each piano key –



Martin James Bartlett Concert pianist

Born July 20, 1996

2004 Began piano studies at RCM Junior Department

2009 Extended studies with Emily Jeffrey at Purcell School

May 2014 Winner BBC Young Musician of the Year, playing Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, live on BBC TV and radio

October 2014 Featured on God Only Knows BBC charity single alongside Elton John, Stevie Wonder and Nicola Benedetti

July 2015 BBC Proms debut performing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with Eric Whitacre

September 2015 Performed private concert at RCM for the First Lady of China, Peng Liyuan

June 2016 Performed at Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday thanksgiving service, broadcast live on BBC One from St. Paul's Cathedral

July 2017 Reached quarter-finals of the Van Cliburn Competition in Fort Worth, Texas

will go towards assisting Martin to secure an instrument.

Martin said: "I have been fortunate to enjoy a full scholarship at the RCM and access to excellent pianos but the strings on my old piano at home are always breaking. It's just not up to the job."

If you would like to attend or support the Martin James Bartlett piano concert, please contact Julie Webb at julie.webb@larkinsurance.co.uk

London Sinfonietta
1968-2018

50
years
young





Looking back but moving forward

Lark's relationship with the London Sinfonietta goes from strength to strength as the ensemble marks its 50th year of creating contemporary music with a special anniversary concert

The London Sinfonietta has been a groundbreaking classical music ensemble since 1968, attracting world-class musicians and composers to work together on exciting new music.

A series of events are being held to mark the group's birthday, including a Lark co-sponsored 50th Anniversary Concert on January 24, at the Royal Festival Hall, in London.

The London Sinfonietta's Chief Executive and Artistic Director Andrew Burke says he is 'hugely excited' by the anniversary. He said: "We have a fantastic legacy of music and composers who form our rich and successful past – we are a small organisation but our reputation and what we stand for is still innovative and relevant.

"We want to keep the group as fresh as possible; while we invent

future music we can be part of contemporary culture."

The anniversary concert will be in two parts – the first section to celebrate the past with founding conductor David Atherton performing Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *The Message*; Igor Stravinsky's *Octet* and György Ligeti's *Chamber Concerto*.

The second part of the concert will feature commissions by living composers the group is working with more regularly including Deborah Pritchard with a new work, *River Above*, for solo saxophone (world premiere); Samantha Fernando *Formations* (world premiere); Hans Abrahamsen (*London premiere*) plus *Encore!* (14 variations on a Purcell Hornpipe (world premiere).

Andrew said: "We therefore greatly appreciate Lark's support as it unlocks the ability to do more things

that both we and Lark care about. Lark is a rare organisation that holds the same values as the London Sinfonietta and our partnership is very natural.

"In the six months leading to our anniversary the London Sinfonietta has played music by composers who helped establish the group's pre-eminence.

"We have to learn from the past because composers formed our reputation but the programme also looks to involving younger composers and people writing new work which is being produced in site-specific locations.

"We are looking back but moving forward."

The concert will be broadcast live by BBC Radio 3, the London Sinfonietta's Broadcast Partner for the 2017/18 season.



Images from pages 8-9

Clockwise from top: Michel van der Aa's *The Book of Disquiet* with actor Samuel West 2016 Credit Ted Lamb; London Sinfonietta perform Steve Reich at Kings Place 2015 Credit Aylin Elci; Ensemble in Russia in the 1980s; Hans Werner Henze with former Artistic Director Michael Vyner at rehearsals in the 1970s; *Under The Skin* 2017 Credit Domizia Salusest; Mark Padmore performs in Birtwistle's *The Corridor* 2009 Credit Malcolm Watson; Centre: David Atherton, co-founder and Music Director from 1967-1973



Pianist John Constable played in the London Sinfonietta's first concert and has been hugely influential across its 50-year history

IT'S ABOUT THE FUTURE

Principal pianist John Constable, pictured on page 10, played in the London Sinfonietta's first concert and has maintained a progressive mind-set, consistently wanting the group to try new things and to look forward.

His standards are what the London Sinfonietta lives by, although he says that the secret of the group's success is that they have never moved away from making new music to the highest standard.

John said: "We haven't stuck with playing the music of 1968, we have played new pieces to a fantastic standard. Everything changes, but we have been at the forefront, and if somebody wants to try something new, we do it.

"When we started out people were not playing this sort of thing very much – none of us were specialists in contemporary music – we were specialists in our own field, playing in ensembles and so on.

"I was a member of the Royal Opera House in the mid-60s when the London Sinfonietta's co-founder David Atherton said 'I am doing a couple of concerts next year, would you like to play them?'

"I had played in modern operas for Covent Garden so I said 'yes, fine' but I never thought the group would become such a large part of my life, let alone how much it would be part of worldwide music.

"We worked with composer-conductors such as Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen as well as Sir George Benjamin, Oliver Knussen and Sir Simon Rattle. Composers knew they would get the best possible music and make music from anything put in front of us."

John considers the 50th anniversary concert to be as much about the future as it is about the past and he believes it is best to have new faces on the stage. He has chosen not to be part of the anniversary concert.

He said: "I will not be playing at the concert. I have played for 50 years and as much as I love it, the London Sinfonietta needs to look forward. It has been a large, important part of my life so I am not retiring." Everyone at Lark is glad to hear it.



Judith Choi Castro, one of the London Sinfonietta's Academy musicians who will be playing at the birthday concert

ACADEMY GAVE ME INSPIRATION

The London Sinfonietta Academy has been running for nine years and more than 300 young musicians have been involved in the scheme.

Violinist Judith Choi Castro is one of those players who spent a week in London to rehearse repertoire with coaching from musicians and joined a concert at the end of the week.

Judith, from Tenerife, is now working with the London Sinfonietta in a professional capacity and will take part in the anniversary concert.

She said: "I studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music but I always loved contemporary music so I applied to join the academy during the summer holidays. It was really inspiring to play new music so I consider myself so lucky to be involved in such an innovative group and working with amazing, talented musicians."

Andrew Burke said: "We enjoy watching careers take off. The anniversary concert will feature 27 young players from academy musicians we have met along the way – and that is important, as well as commissioning new music from emerging composers, we also make sure we generate the next generation of performing musicians who will sustain our traditions."

Conductors, too, were part of the academy and Geoffrey Paterson, who we met in 2010, is going to be performing *Cave* later on in the 2017/18 season; it's a new music theatre piece that we have commissioned with Tansy Davis and Nick Drake.

"We are showing the influence we can have in building careers of creative young players."

For anniversary concert tickets visit southbankcentre.co.uk

Trust your luck

One of the London Sinfonietta's greatest fans is distinguished international concerto violin soloist György Pauk who premiered works of many leading composers over six decades

Recognised as one of the leading violinists of his generation, György Pauk says the London Sinfonietta's success is based on keeping to its original brief – creating the best quality contemporary music by inviting top musicians to join them.

György, 81, said: “When directors David Atherton and Nicholas Snowman started the London Sinfonietta there was no-one else like them.

“They attracted the most wonderful directors and composers so when

I was invited to play with the ensemble, I jumped at the chance.

“The London Sinfonietta has endured through continuing to always embrace contemporary music and working with wonderful conductors and musicians.”

György retired from the concert stage in 2007 and is Professor of Violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He came to England in 1961, helped by violinist Yehudi Menuhin, and found London was ‘an amazing city for musicians.’

György's journey to the UK was tinged with sadness, leaving behind his grandmother and great teacher Ede Zathureczky in his troubled homeland of Hungary. György now considers England his home and says ‘I love this country; it is a great country – I occasionally visit Budapest but London is my home’.

György lost his parents and paternal grandparents during the Second World War and was brought up by his maternal grandmother.

He said: “I have no memory of my parents. The nearest I had to a father figure was my violin teacher Ede Zathureczky and I have named my school at the RAM after him.

“I was accepted into the Liszt Academy at the age of 13. I was little and wore short trousers while all of the other students were 18 and over. Ede Zathureczky was a pupil of Jenő Hubay and became his successor when he died, continuing the tradition, so I learned first-hand.”

György was 20 when he left Hungary during the revolution of 1956. He said: “It broke my heart to leave behind my grandmother and Ede.

“I went to live in Amsterdam and soon after met my wife, Susie, who is also a Hungarian.

“We met through friends. We were very young, but we needed each other and we married when she was 19 and I was 22.

“She has always helped me in my career and in 1959 when I needed a decent violin to play in the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition she went into the famous Max Muller violin shop in Amsterdam and told them the situation.

“The owner said he had a Guaragnini in his safe and he lent it to me. Can ▶



György Pauk, in Budapest: ‘I learned to hold a bow correctly from an early age’



Clockwise: György with Ralph Kirshbaum and Peter Frankl; with his beloved teacher Ede Zathureczky; concert poster from 1962, György in his heyday and with his wife Susie

► you believe it – what an idea, what luck!

“I was just 22 and two months later I went on to win the Premier Grand Prix playing a Brahms violin concerto.

“Through this competition I met Yehudi Menuhin and he wrote a letter of recommendation to allow me into the UK to pursue my career.

“Menuhin was my passport to a new life. I came to London and five years later became a British resident.

“The Max Muller shop owner said I could keep the violin for three years and I took it with me when I moved.

“We started a new life, in a new world but, three weeks before my debut in London, the violin owner died and her relatives needed the violin so we had to take it back.”

LONDON DEBUT

György made his London debut with the London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Lorin Maazel.

He said: “It was not easy – for

my first recital at Wigmore Hall, I did not have a violin, so again through a lot of luck and friends, Manny Hurwitz, the professor at the Royal Academy of Music, found a musician who would lend me an Amati violin. I received it a week beforehand.

“I consider myself very lucky because being in London enabled me to meet many people and enjoy a solo career. It did also mean lots of compromises – my wife brought up the children while I was travelling the world. ►

‘Letter from Yehudi was my passport to London’

► “I played Bartok in London and I was only 25. When you are young you have such courage!

“All the time I kept my name in a Hungarian way – it was the name my parents gave me – but I have had lots of problems. György means George in English but is pronounced ‘Yerg’.

“When I went to Australia the people at a radio station asked me how

to pronounce my name but after a while, when they still couldn’t get it, they said ‘we are going to call you Gregory Peck’. That was funny.”

For almost 50 years György travelled to all continents. He made his USA debut with the Chicago Symphony at the invitation of Sir George Solti. Here, György struck more luck

when an American collector asked him if he would mind trying his violins.

György said: “He brought two Strads and two Guadagninis to my hotel. I played each one and he asked ‘which one do you like best, which suits you most?’”

“I said the Strad and he said ‘you can have it’.

“Can you imagine?”

György went on to buy the Strad and play an average of 80 concerts a season and during that time he also spent three or four weeks a year as part of a Chamber music trio, as well as recording with the BBC orchestra in concerts and studios.

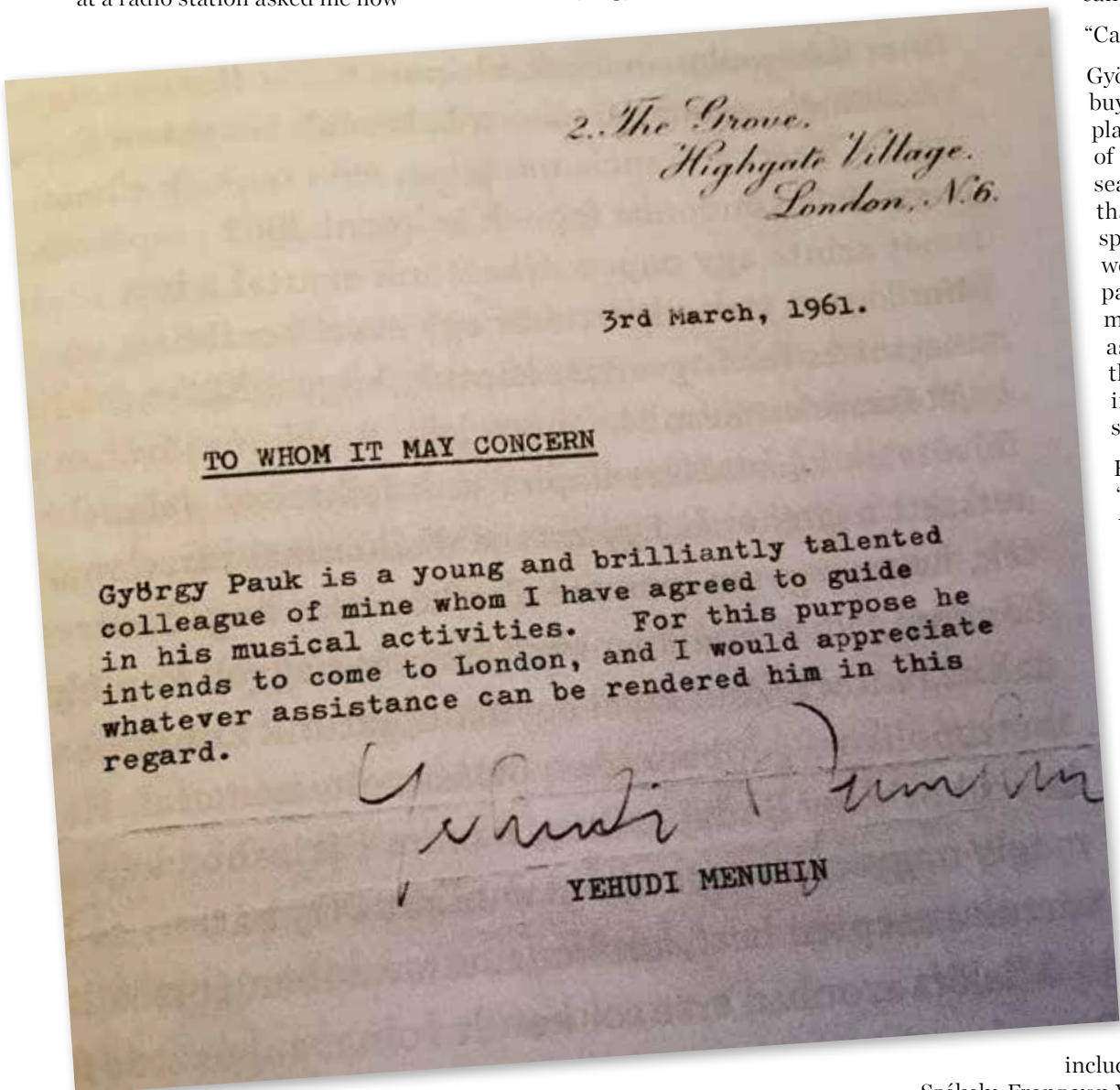
He said: “Chamber music teaches you to be a better musician, to listen to other people.

“I was very lucky that apart from my solo career I had a piano trio for many years, with Ralph Kirshbaum and Peter Frankl.”

György is one of the last in a line of exceptional Hungarian violinists

including Zoltán

Székely, Franz von Vecsey, Tibor Varga, Joseph Szigeti, André Gertler, Loránd Fenyves and



The letter from violinist Yehudi Menuhin that give György Pauk the chance to build a musical career in England

► Sándor Végh. Many of them studied with Jenő Hubay.

György said: "My teacher Ede Zathureczky knew Bartók so I was lucky to hear it first hand and I have passed this on. As the last in this line of Hungarian violinists it is a privilege to know good people come to the Royal Academy because of me.

"You do not have to be Hungarian to play Bartók well, but it helps. I named the violin department at the Royal Academy of Music after Ede Zathureczky because he was so important to me.

"When I teach, I encourage my students to have confidence. I tell them, be good at your instrument. It is all to do with confidence.

"I am so happy that I have changed so many lives for the better."

György, who plays on the Massart Stradivarius of 1714, which is insured by Lark, said:

"The Hungarian violin school is distinguished by the quality, beauty and purity of the sound.

"The way to find this sound is to find the balance between the two hands, and to be absolutely free in the body, without any pressure – like the human voice.

György, who retired from a career stretching more than half a century gave a series of farewell concerts, playing the Bartók Concerto with the Budapest Festival Orchestra conducted by Ivan Fischer.

He said: "At my last concert in Budapest I knew inside, now is the time to retire.

"My fingers were a bit slower and to be honest, a practising violinist has to stand up for six hours and that was something else to consider."

György continues to give masterclasses around the world, including the International Menuhin Music Academy, Oberlin College Ohio and Juilliard School of Music in New York.

He said: "I love teaching. Schools need to encourage quality. Violin playing is difficult, but it should look easy and then you know you're using your hands and fingers correctly. The difficulty is that we constantly

have to work against gravity. We have to win – with ease.

"I learned at the age of six or seven the correct way to hold a bow.

"The most important thing in producing a big sound is to use the weight of the right arm which must be matched by the speed of vibrato. Some schools talk about pressure with the right arm, but I don't agree. If you press, you choke the sound, and it becomes ugly and forced. One can only create volume with the weight of the right arm.

*I am so happy
that I have changed
so many lives for
the better*

"The most common difficulty I find in new students is bow control. The bow should be the continuation of the arm.

"Many players are afraid that if they're not pressing with the fingers they'll drop the bow, but that's all in the mind. It's a big problem for some players because as soon as they put pressure on the bow the wrist becomes stiff, which means they are unable to control the bow speed.

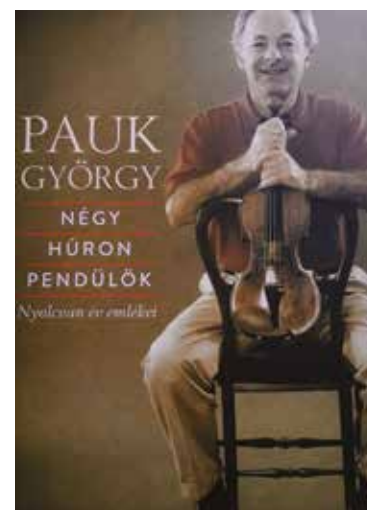
"Sometimes I ask a student to sing and explain that is how we have to play the violin.

"Think of your breathing. How you sing a melody is usually the most natural way of phrasing it, so then I get students to try to imitate it on their violin.

"If you want to express a special phrase, you need two things – dynamics and timing. Timing comes from breathing, which is why the best way to understand a phrase is to sing it. Humans have to breathe and music has to breathe."

"You also have to know the piece and know exactly what you want to do with it."

György has two children, Thomas and Catherine, and four grandchildren, Gabriella, Joshua, Sasha and Alina aged 14 to 23.



György Pauk
Born October 26, 1936

Hon RAM, Hon GSM

1945 Began studies with Imre Waldbauer

1947-1949 studied with János Temesvári

1949 graduated at Franz Liszt Academy of Music Academy with Ede Zathureczky

1956 Left Hungary for the Netherlands

1959 Winner of the Jacques Thibaud International Violin Competition

1961 Invited by Yehudi Menuhin to settle in London

1987 Royal Academy of Music Strings - Ede Zathureczky Professor of Violin

2007 Retired from concert stage

2007 Published book in Hungarian, translated as *Pending on Four Strings*, pictured above. The book will be published in English later this year.

He said: "My children are musical but not musicians – I did not wish them such a difficult profession, but for anyone who does I tell them 'you must have talent, don't compromise and look for your own luck.'"

LarkMusic online

Our new quote and buy portal

We are getting to grips with our new online portal which makes it easier for you to purchase insurance for your instruments.

You can now get a quote, buy and view policy documents online 365 days a year!.

We have had a few small teething problems to iron out but we think you will find the system quick and easy to obtain a comprehensive and affordable policy. We thank you for your patience.

Over the last 20 years we have provided music insurance to a range of audiences such as musicians, orchestras, dealers and students.

We continue to share our clients' passion for music and pride ourselves on the personal service and advice we provide.

Our friendly and fully qualified musical instrument team will still be on hand should you need any guidance.



By Gemma Deavall

Divisional Director

Public Liability Cover now available with LarkMusic

We have noticed that with so many musicians playing in public areas, it is becoming more important that they cover themselves for any injury or damage they may cause.

To answer this need, and with a competitive price, we now provide clients with the ability to quickly and easily purchase market-leading Public Liability cover of up to £5 million.

So, whether you are a professional musician or playing occasionally on a stage, Public Liability cover provides essential protection from

a variety of claims such as someone tripping over a wire or a stand and hurting themselves to accidentally dropping an instrument and causing damage to property or a person.

As legal expenses and claims costs can be high we can offer public liability cover up to £5 million. To add this cover to an existing policy please contact the music team.

Purchasing online

We are really excited about the introduction of our portal which will allow new clients to be able to obtain a quote, purchase and pay online, plus make mid-term adjustments.



Check it out

Please take a look at our new online system at larkmusic.co.uk. We love to hear from our clients, so if you have any feedback please write to me at gemma.deavall@larkinsurance.co.uk



Lark understands the busy schedules many musicians face so our new system will save you time to focus on your passion



Saxophone at sunrise.
Mandolin at midnight.

We know your passion for music
doesn't run 9-5, so why should your
ability to cover your instrument?

Our new online quote and buy portal
ensures you can get the best insurance
any time of the day, from £35 per annum.

Visit larkmusic.co.uk for more details.

LARK

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.



/larkmusicalinstruments



@Lark_MI





The quality of musical offerings I encounter during my work with Lark Music continues to be an absolute privilege and meeting cellist Steven Isserlis backstage after a concert at the Wigmore Hall was the icing on the cake, particularly after we featured his sister Annette in our last LARKmusic magazine.

It was also magical to hear the Tallis Scholars at Temple Church – an atmospheric evening before Christmas where wonderful voices filled the historic London church that was built by Knights Templar in the 12th century.

From old to new, the London Sinfonietta's World Premiere Wednesdays continue to inspire and many clients and contacts who join us are knocked out by the experience of hearing new, live music in warm and friendly surroundings. The first time I met composer Tansy Davies I discovered she used to live round the corner from me in a Kent village.

Tansy is working with Nick Davies on a new opera called Cave which will be performed at The Printworks in June and will feature Mark Padmore who also came along to the launch at the Groucho Club. This is also the same evening I met lovely Darragh Morgan who played one of Tansy's compositions, and he'll be featured in the next issue of LARKmusic.

The London Chamber Orchestra is also on my radar and I attended the rehearsal concert of Wunderlust, with conductor Ashkenazy. Vaughan Williams Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis and Songs of Travel, followed by Dvorak's Symphony No 9 which still makes me think of the Hovis advert (showing my age again).

I also continue to bump into friends at the Royal College of Music whether it is attending Masterclasses, concert, our own events or Soirée d'or the annual gala dinner held at the V&A.

Isabella Valentini and I were able to attend a Wagner fest arranged by RCM Patron Isla Baring. It was the 25th anniversary concert of the Tait

New music competition for London?



It was exciting to attend the launch event for the London Classical International Music Competition, hosted by Monsoon founder Peter Simon.

The competition is the brainchild of Professor Vanessa Lartage, Head of Keyboard at the Royal College of Music, and her former student pianist Ilya Kondratiev, pictured above.

Ilya has stepped forward as the competition's artistic director and plans are in place for the first competition in 2020.

Ilya said: "We want to create a landmark event for London and bring classical music closer to the community.

"It is an ambitious project and the annual competition will feature three disciplines; piano, voice and wind.

"We will start with the piano in 2020 and the best 24 applicants will be invited to London.

"The competition will be structured in four rounds, over 10 days. The first three rounds will be hosted at the Royal College of Music and we would like the final to be held at the Royal Festival Hall, so we are discussing dates.

"We intend to support the prizewinner for the next three years by organising concerts and events to contribute to their career."

"Jaques Samuel Pianos has agreed to support the first competition and a fundraising concert will be held on February 15 at the Russian Cultural Centre, in London.

Vanessa added: "I always wondered why isn't there a piano competition in London? I really want this competition to take off and do something for London, for cultural life."

To be involved, attend the concert or to learn more please visit londonclassical.org.uk

MUSICAL NOTES

News from Julie Webb

Lark Private Client Director

Memorial Trust. The Trust supports young Australian performing artists in the UK. Antoine Wagner introduced Stuart Skelton who was accompanied by wonderful ladies in amazing winged headdresses and took us on a Wagner journey. St Paul's in Knightsbridge was buzzing to The Ride of the Valkyries.

Inspired by opera, I've been to the V&A's Opera Power Fashion exhibition twice! Interactive headphones make all the difference.

Thanks, Sam

Lark Music was delighted to sponsor the Sam Haywood piano recital at the Conway Hall, in London.

Sam has played to critical acclaim around the world and he treated his audience to the preludes of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford from his new CD.

Sam also thrilled guests with his own composition, "the other side" which got everyone talking. It was written for the Musik und Dichtung series in Vienna, inspired by Alfred Kubin's The Other Side.

The recital, organised by Rhinegold, was followed by an informal Q&A and Sam generously gave guests an insight into his world – from his admiration of the Charles Villiers Stanford's preludes to the works of Julius Isserlis.

Guests also learned that Sam has written a children's opera and is involved in family concerts, workshops and masterclasses. He is on the roster of Musical Orbit, the online teaching website and his invention 'memorystars' helps reduce the time needed to memorise a music score.

Sam's disc, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford – Preludes, is on the Hyperion label.

Julie



From top clockwise: Sam Haywood enjoys after-concert drinks at Conway Hall; Julie Webb and Isabella Valentini with Jilly Little; Nic Jones of Strathmore Publishing; Julie Young and Mary Jones from Beaufort Major talk to Julie Foster, from Metro Bank, right; Sam with Lark Managing Director David Foster; Lark Music consultant Jessica Sharp

Jamal's magical debut

After Lark's sponsorship of cellist Jamal Aliyev's concert at the Gower Festival, in Wales, Lark Private Client Director Julie Webb took a sneak peek while Jamal was rehearsing for his BBC Proms solo debut at the Royal Albert Hall in London

There were very few people about when I sat in the vast Royal Albert Hall, in London, to watch the BBC Proms rehearsals.

Presenter Katie Derham ran through her lines with curlers in her hair while the backstage crew carried out their light and sound checks.

I felt quite emotional when I saw Jamal Aliyev's name on the dressing room door and more so as I watched him walk out onto the famous stage for the first time in his life.

Jamal, 23, had been chosen to play as a 'BBC introducing classical artist', a scheme which offers a platform for exceptional new musical talent. As part of the celebrations to mark movie composer John Williams' 85th birthday Jamal's task was to play Sayuri's Theme, from the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*, and carry the sound of his cello around the 7,000-seater auditorium.

As Jamal began to play I realised how much pressure there was on him – his solo debut would see him play the first minute alone before the full BBC Concert Orchestra would join in.

The BBC Proms is the world's greatest classical music festival showcasing the best-known orchestras and musicians on the planet – Jamal's rehearsal went well but I wondered how he would cope the next day, on the big night.

I needn't have worried, his tender rendition of Sayuri's Theme prompted a congratulatory handshake from conductor Keith Lockhart and Katie Derham told the audience 'judging by this debut performance we are likely to see a lot more of Jamal'.

The audience rose to its feet to applaud Jamal and although I was now at home watching the TV, their response sent shivers down my spine.

Later, I asked Jamal how he felt that evening. He said: "The whole thing was magical but it was also really scary; I felt as if my heart was coming out of my chest as I left my dressing room to go on stage.

"When I was walking to the backstage, I knew I was ready, I knew I had practised enough for this night, both mentally and physically, but it was still challenging to just stop thinking and concentrate on the music."

The whole thing was magical but it was also really scary

"Looking at the hall from the backstage door, just before walking in, was the moment when I thought to myself: 'why am I doing this?'"

"It was a lot of pressure, of course, knowing the Proms are broadcast across the world on radio and TV – millions of people watching ..."

"This type of music is not something I would usually play. It was actually written by John Williams for Yo Yo Ma, an amazing cellist, so I had a lot to live up to.

"Once I walked on stage and sat down to play, it was truly an exceptional experience that I will never forget, especially that complete

silence before I started playing the opening theme solo before the orchestra joined in.

"The feeling of so many people watching me in that wonderful, enormous space and waiting for me to start playing, gave me a magical feeling of control and endless excitement from the first to the last second I was on the Royal Albert Hall stage.

"My beautiful cello and I have enjoyed lots of concerts together but I was the most proud of it on that night, for being my voice and allowing me to communicate everything I wanted to tell the audience at that moment."

Jamal's journey to the Proms repaid almost two decades of practice which started when he was five with his grandfather teaching him the cello on a quarter-size instrument.

Although Jamal was born in Azerbaijan, his musical family moved to Turkey when he was five months old. A family friend had 'landed a good orchestral job' in Turkey and invited all of his friends to create an orchestra.

"About 50 of us moved to Turkey," said Jamal. "My grandfather, cellist Kara Aliyev, a National State Artist of Azerbaijan, my mum Sevinc who also plays the cello, my dad, David, who is a violinist and my grandmother Larisa who played the piano and accompanied me for many years.

"My grandfather taught me until I was 15 and then I moved to the Menuhin School, in the UK. I would go to his concerts and I was inspired by him and his music, which is probably why I started the cello in the first place. ►





Jamal Aliyev: ‘The RCM has given me endless opportunities’

► “When I was younger I did resent not being allowed out to play with my friends until I had done my practice but my parents were determined that I should become the best I could be.

“At the time I was too young to understand that being a cellist could be an occupation, a career.”

In 2005, Jamal went to Paris with his mother to play for cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.

Jamal said: “She had a connection to a friend from Azerbaijan who was a great supporter of musicians from his country.

“I had a lesson with Mstislav, or Slava as we call him, and it went really well. I went home and I didn’t hear anything for some time but after a while I received a letter from the Yehudi Menuhin School in London, saying their president Mstislav Rostropovich had recommended me to the school and I was invited to study there with a full scholarship.”

In the next school year Jamal’s life changed dramatically as he left his family and baby brother Cem to board in Cobham, Surrey.

The huge transition was both ‘good and bad’ says Jamal.

He said: “I had been learning English for 10 years before I came to the UK but my vocabulary was limited. You learn a language quickly when you are immersed in it – you have no choice and within a year, I was completely fine.

“There was quite a strict timetable for each day of the week which I found very hard to get used to but I had nothing to worry about, though, everything was made ready so students can concentrate on music, practice and performance.

“I actually do not know who sponsored me at the Menuhin School but I would like to say a big thank you as I was then able to apply for a place at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music. I chose the RCM because my teacher Thomas Carroll also taught there.

“The RCM has been amazing and the opportunities are endless; competitions, various auditions, internal and external performances. In my first year I was applying for everything and getting involved in as many projects as possible.

“This was all super helpful and introduced me to so many people. Even though I only got accepted for about 10% of everything I applied for, by slowly trying everything, things have luckily developed the way I wanted and it was a great journey, starting from nothing.”

Jamal is now studying for his first year Masters and hopes to go on to take his Artist’s Diploma. He is with the Young Classical Artists (YCAT) for representation and is based in London with a working visa. He said: “I love London, and in two years I can apply to stay in the UK permanently and hopefully become a British Citizen.

He said: “YCAT works in partnership with many important venues around the world. It is helping me to build my career and gives support, guidance and artist management. I am very happy to be working with them and have great hopes for the future.”



DIARY DATES

February 8 Lunchtime Concert
New North London Synagogue

February 13 Recital at the
Wigmore Hall, London 7.30pm

February 24 Private recital,
London. Details from jamal@
jamalaliyev.com

March 3 Bolton Symphony
Orchestra, Manchester 7.30pm

March 16-17 Isle of Wight
Symphony Orchestra, Isle of
Wight 7.30pm

April 2 Recital at St Mary’s
Perivale, London 7.30pm

April 4-13 IMS Prussia Cove
Masterclasses

April 14 Saffron Symphony
Orchestra, Saffron Walden
7.30pm

April 22 Recital at SJE Arts,
Oxford 5pm

April 28 Cambridge Symphony
Orchestra, London 7.30pm

April 29 Cambridge Symphony
Orchestra, Cambridge 7.30pm

Because comprehensive insurance lets you enjoy life's simple pleasures

From family heirlooms to newly bought treasures, we've been protecting

precious items for over 60 years.

So we know just how to make sure you get the best out of what's important to you.

Family run and focused on protecting your passions since 1948.

LARK



LARKINSURANCE.CO.UK



Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

@Larkinsurance



It's never too early to enjoy music ...

From Kate Bush to Daniel Day-Lewis, The Conservatoire, in Blackheath, has nurtured great musical and artistic talent. Lark Music Early Years bursaries offer free places to pre-school children from low-income families to learn music at The Conservatoire and Lark Music Account Handler Isabella Valentini finds out more



Picture: Rachel Rimmel

... so who'll be the next Kate Bush or Eska Mtungwazi?

The Lark Music Early Years bursaries are thought to be the only such arrangement of their kind in the UK, a scheme for children up to the age of five years, which aims to ignite a spark that encourages a lifetime of musical enjoyment.

It is a new scheme at an otherwise historic establishment; The Conservatoire, Blackheath, is 136 years old and its alumni includes singer Kate Bush (1970-76, see attendance register, page 26) and actor Daniel Day-Lewis (1968-69) through to former bursary student and Mercury Music prize nominee, backing singer-turned-soloist Eska Mtungwazi.

Jenny McMillan OBE, who assists The Conservatoire with fundraising, says the Lark Early Years bursaries are 'particularly special' to the charity.

Jenny said: "This is the first time we have offered bursaries to pre-school children and we are not aware of any other similar offering.

"Children use music to express their feelings, explore their emotions and develop their imagination. Before they can speak toddlers sense rhythm, structure, pattern, pulse. Through instruments children develop motor skills, improvisation and accomplishment.

"Developing these skills at a young age is the foundation for a lifelong love of music."

Emel, Frankie and Oscar, all two, started the Toddler Tunes course in September to discover new instruments (including their voices), develop their musical skills and listening, their imagination and fine motor skills.

A fourth recipient, Isabel, age five, joins The Conservatoire's Junior Musicianship class where she will explore core skills in rhythm, pitch and musical expression.



Sarah and Isaiah Awolesi show their talent at a fundraising concert



John Keeley

The Conservatoire works tirelessly to develop its work in the community, led by Managing Director John Keeley, who himself received scholarships to complete his education.

John, who has worked in roles to establish new schools and support rapid improvements in multi-academy trusts, said: "The Conservatoire is a busy centre, but I would like us to be far more out there, working with schools and groups, so we can help transform

people's lives rather than just enrich them.

"There is a fondness with which the Conservatoire is regarded locally and I want to build on this foundation."

John, an organist and pianist, said: "Scholarships helped me get an education so giving more people the opportunity to access music and arts is important to me.

"Over the next five years I would like to see us working from a second centre, within Lewisham or Greenwich, to tie in education provision and some social enterprise, helping people grow their business – a multi-use space which has creativity at its centre.

"We also want to find new ways of delivering what we do, such as the Lark Music bursary scheme. We support 45 young people on various bursaries, all children from low-income families.

"We focus hard on fundraising and sponsorship, plus we have generous individual donors but I don't want to give a child a scholarship for a year, give them a taste of something amazing, and then withdraw it. ►

The Class of 1970

AUTUMN TERM 1970							AUTUMN TERM 1970						
ENROL NO	NAME	ENROL FEE	TUITION	ARREARS	SUNDAYS	TOTAL	ENROL	NAME	ENROL FEE	TUITION	ARREARS	SUNDAYS	TOTAL
		21 -	100 17 5	6 12 -	6 10 -	9 12 - 9			27 6 -	27 5 5	15 10 -		
A	P 25 Peckin Andrew J		10 10 -				C 16 Bush Catherine	1 1 -	10 10 -				
A	P 31 Peckin Thomas J		10 - -				B 60 Butler Susan		4 - -				
A	R 36 Robson Catherine		4 - -				E 47 Essex Linda	2 2 -	7 - -				
A	P 90 Peary Matthew	1 1 -	10 10 -				F 14 Freeman Shelley		8 10 -				
A	S 101 Simons Mr J.P.		10 10 -				F 9 Freeman Suzanne		10 10 -				
B	S 102 Simons Kathleen		4 - -				G 74 Green Mrs C.M.		20 - -				
B	S 36 Sanger Mrs E		10 10 -				B 87 Gull David	1 1 -	7 17 6				
B	S 60 Souter James		20 10 -				H 140 Hesel Nora		10 - -				
B	S 85 Scofield Benjamin	1 1 -	10 10 -				H 29 Hesel Josephine		1 1 -				
B	S 41 Synges Patricia		10 10 -				H 27 Hughes Ann		10 10 -				
B	S 102 Synges Frances		10 - -				H 38 Hughes Sylvia		10 - -				
B	S 114 Suter Mrs G	2 2 -	7 17 6				K 50 Kaley Jane		4 - -				
C	S 104 Stuart Anabella		10 10 -				L 95 Lawrence Michael		4 - -				
C	S 44 Scott James		10 10 -				H 114 Healey Mr J.	1 1 -	7 17 6				
C	T 71 Tich Paula		4 - -				R 96 Richards Mrs P	2 2 -	8 - -				
C	T 78 Thomas Deborah	1 1 -	10 10 -				S 3 Sanger Mrs B		8 10 -				
D	T 60 Thomas Mrs M.H.		10 10 -				W 97 Woodall Susan	1 1 -	10 10 -				
D	T 16 Tava Mrs P.		10 10 -					26 10 70	6 2 -	16 2 16 -			
E	T 6 Turner Robert		12 10 -										
E	T 74 Turner Mr. Ivan		10 - -				H 5 Mc Allen Victoria A				6 6 -		
E	T 74 Thomas Monica		10 10 -				H 1 "O'Hara R				6 6 -		
E	T 17 Tubb Mrs A.		8 10 -				S 16 "Singer J.				12 12 -		
E	V 16 Vidgen Mr. B.		10 10 -				P 17 Mrs Langley, I. Handley				6 6 -		
G	W 62 Wilson Claire		10 10 -				H 11 Mrs Healy, M. Healy				6 6 -		
G	W 53 Wilson Imogen		10 - -				L 90 Mrs Winder, L. Liddle				6 6 -		
G	W 84 Wood Mrs K.		8 10 -				H 11 Mrs Healy, L. L. A. Carr		1 1 -				
H	W 54 White Helen						A 9 Allen Mrs B.		10 10 -				

Class of 1970: Student Catherine Bush (Kate Bush) is registered in the top right-hand column

“The Conservatoire is best known for music, but we also offer arts and drama for all ages, from sculpture and life-modelling to abstract painting. There’s a long waiting list for individual tuition and we try to make courses financially successful.

“The Conservatoire contains what is believed to be the oldest surviving

“It’s a rich mix, for some classes people can just turn up for an hour or two to refine a technique. We also offer early years classes and classes for pregnant women who want to bring music to their unborn babies.

“We also work with special needs children and the charity Child Therapy; in the February half-term

there will be a signing choir concert.

“My central belief is that arts and music can transform people’s lives so it is a great privilege to have the opportunity to lead the organisation through the next phase of its development.”

For more details visit conservatoire.org.uk or call 020 8852 0234.

“My central belief is that arts and music can transform people’s lives”

purpose-built drawing studio and individuals come here term by term, while some join weekly day courses.

We offer programmes for all ages including those who have never picked up an instrument to people preparing for university and enjoying masterclasses.



The Conservatoire, in Blackheath, south-east London, was built in 1881 and continues to be at the heart of its community

Music in art

In Greek mythology, Apollo presided over the Nine Muses who lived on Mount Parnassus. I would not wish to commit the hybris of claiming London to be the Mount Parnassus of the modern world but the city is certainly blessed with an enviable cultural vitality.

Music and painting have long existed symbiotically and the aim of this article is to illustrate the diversity of paintings of musical subjects which can be viewed in the capital, all in the course of a short walk.

Musical imagery was a popular motif adopted by the Old Masters, in particular the Dutch painters of the 17th century.

In the National Gallery, Vermeer portrays *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (Fig.1 National Gallery, London), the lady plays her keyboard alone with an abandoned viola da gamba lying before her. This symbolism likely implies an absent partner, musical or amorous. A message of illicit love becomes stronger when one notices that the picture which hangs behind her is *The Procuress*, by Dirk van Baburen.

It is possible that Vermeer is suggesting this elegantly dressed lady is a courtesan. Equally, he may have simply been keen to offer an enticing narrative for the viewer.

The second work by Vermeer in the National Gallery *Lady Standing at a Virginal* (Fig.2) illustrates some of the same themes.

The lady distractedly plays the keyboard, seemingly more interested in the empty chair. She seems either to await a companion or to regret that she has already bade him farewell.

Either way, the back wall bears a



Art dealer, writer and historian Angus Haldane discusses musical imagery from the Old Masters to 20th century Mondrian

portrait of an impish Cupid holding a playing card. The presence of Cupid alludes to the idea of love as a game of chance, of good and bad fortune and of as many variants as a game of cards.

Moving to one of the jewels in the crown of Marylebone – The Wallace Collection – the reader can see Jan

Steen's amusing *Harpsichord Lesson* (Fig.3) which shows the courtship of a young player by a much older man.

A single key, strangely positioned vertically on the wall, aligns itself with the elderly teacher's hand, implying his desire to unlock the heart of the young lady. ▶



Fig 1 Lady Seated at a Virginal, by Johannes Vermeer (National Gallery, London)

► The painting of Venus and Cupid behind the couple alludes to his desire, but the fact the little Cupid is asleep perhaps implies the suitor will be frustrated in his desires.

Every diligent student of Shakespeare is familiar with Duke Orsino's remark "If music be the food of love, play on" (Twelfth Night). Shakespeare, however, frequently used musical language to imply a more bawdy sense of a body being 'played' as an instrument during love-making.

The curvaceousness of the viol family of instruments lent a natural suggestiveness to a composition, especially when juxtaposed with bathing nymphs, or half-dressed ladies as in the case of Sir Peter Lely's group composition, sometimes called The Concert, in the Courtauld Gallery. (Fig.4).

As we move, *affrettando*, into the 18th century, the National Portrait Gallery displays the Sharp Family conversation piece (Fig. 5) by Johann Zoffany.

Shakespeare used musical language to imply a sense of the body being played as an instrument during love-making

This family of remarkable amateur musicians gave concerts on board their barge, the Apollo. The patriarch and surgeon to King George III, William Sharp, stands at the prow, raising his hat to the viewer. He played French horns which he has casually left on the piano.

William's first brother was a doctor who played the cello, which he has abandoned in the left-hand corner and his other brother, Granville, a campaigner for the abolition of slavery, lifts aloft his flageolets as if haranguing a crowd.

James Sharp, an engineer, holds the Serpent, a remarkably shaped



Fig 2 Lady Standing at a Virginal, by Johannes Vermeer (National Gallery, London)



► Fig 3 Harpsichord Lesson, by Jan Steen (Wallace Collection, London)



Fig 4 The Concert 1640-49, by Peter Lely.
Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London, UK / Bridgeman Images

► instrument, while Elizabeth sits at the piano, Judith holds sheet music in hand and Frances sits precariously with her theorbo.

Finally, for the purposes of a short walk, and the relationship between art and music, we crescendo into the 20th century with the art of Mondrian, an artist whom it is easy, but incorrect, to associate only with rigid blocks of colour and line.

Mondrian began his artistic life as a Fauvist, with splashes of bright, staccato brushstrokes, for example Sun, Church in Zeeland: Zoutelande Church Façade (Tate Modern) which have a lyrical quality.

Mondrian loved to dance and would often ask Peggy Guggenheim for advice on the latest nightclubs to try. His pictures reflect his love of music and, although his composition, Broadway Boogie Woogie is in MOMA, New York, there are many other of his compositions readily viewable in London.

A contemporary of Mondrian, Kandinsky, was a trained musician and his melodic sensibilities are clearly audible and visible in his series of Improvisations, one of which, Improvisation on Mahogany, can be enjoyed at the Courtauld.

Kandinsky was one of the first artists



Fig 5 Sharp Family, by Johann Zoffany (on loan to the National Portrait Gallery, London)

to embrace full abstraction and he painted this work in 1910, less than three years before Stravinsky wrote his Rite of Spring, one of the most important compositions of the modern era. At the premiere of this work in 1913 the unconventional score, musically provocative dissonance and adventurous use

of rhythm caused a riot amongst the audience in the same way as Kandinsky's improvisations and the works of his expressionist movement Der Blaue Reiter, also propelled art towards a new era.

□ Angus Haldane is founder of Haldane Fine Art.



Out & About with Isabella Valentini Lark Musical Instruments Division

The launch of our new online quote and buy system has kept us busy but there has also been plenty of opportunity to get 'out and about' at musical and arts events.

I've visited lots of lovely clients and made many new friends!

The Fine Art Insurance Reception at Bonhams is one of my favourite events and it is always a great opportunity to catch up with insurance professionals who work in the world of Fine Art Insurance, including musical instruments. The event brings people together to catch up and network plus raise money for The Cure Parkinson's Trust.

Blackheath Conservatoire held a stunning evening of music at Stone House, near Lewisham, and after learning first-hand about how our Lark Bursary will be put to use it encouraged me to agree to run the 'Big Half' Marathon to raise money for the Conservatoire.

Tradition took us back to Cremona, in Italy, for Mondomusica – a weekend of visiting clients and prospective clients. We also ate plenty of ice cream, climbed the Campanille in town, and visited the Violin Museum. Our annual party was a huge success and violin biscuit treats, left, made by my friend Mimi Rose went down a treat.



November took Fay Watts and I to Lake Annecy for ALADFI – the French

Association of Luthiers and Bow Makers' AGM. We were resident for the weekend and learned about the Hill bow violin makers from Derek Wilson (his was the only talk we fully understood as everything was in French!) and we were touched to hear the story of Hill bow maker Charles Leggatt, who was killed in action in 1917, aged 37. Charles achieved the finest standards of workmanship and produced the best quality gold and tortoiseshell bows. A tragic loss.

I also enjoyed meeting and talking to students at the Purcell School, in London. Having studied music myself it was interesting to hear about their lives and plans – and a real treat to attend their annual Gala Fundraising dinner in the wonderful Drapers' Hall.

2018 sees lots of exciting plans for the Lark Music team and for me personally, I foresee the year being filled with lots of running in preparation for the London Marathon in April, singing (I've joined a new choir and started to do some solo work again) and many musical delights!

Isabella

Isabella Valentini read music at the University of Birmingham before working as a freelance soprano and singing teacher. She joined the music team in summer 2016 where she works as an Account Handler.

Below: Louise Deacon, Rebecca Edwards, Isabella, Gemma Deavall, Fay Watts, Jessica Nash, Lauren Benallick and Charlie Burlock at Palazzo Trechi, Cremona and below right: Fay and Isabella with young violin maker Maarten de Keukeleire



Interested in joining a Lark Music event? Please contact isabella.valentini@larkinsurance.co.uk

Because wrapping your instrument in cotton wool simply isn't practical

Our music policy has been carefully
designed to allow you to enjoy playing your
instrument with complete peace of mind.

Family run and focused on protecting
your possessions since 1948.

LARK



LARKINSURANCE.CO.UK

 *larkinsurance*

 *@Lark_MI*

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.



LARK

IBEX

 Lark (Group) Limited

 @larkinsurance



LARKINSURANCE.CO.UK

BROADSTAIRS
18 St Peters Park
Broadstairs, Kent
CT10 2BL

CENTURY HOUSE
North Station Road
Colchester, Essex
CO1 1RE

COLMAN HOUSE
King Street
Maidstone, Kent
ME15 1DN

SIMPSON HOUSE
Cherry Orchard Rd
Croydon, Surrey
CR9 6AZ

ROSS HOUSE
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP32 7AR

IBEX HOUSE
42-47 Minories
London
EC3N 1DY

WESTMEAD HOUSE
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 7LP

WIGHAM HOUSE
Wakering Road
Barking, Essex
IG11 8PJ