

LARK *music*

Issue 7

A woman with dark, curly hair and red lipstick is playing a large, wooden harp. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The harp has many strings and is made of light-colored wood. The background is dark.

THE HEALING POWER
OF MUSIC

Featuring Maya Youssef

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Welcome

Our latest edition of LARKmusic is packed with exclusive interviews featuring music makers and music lovers who make a difference to other people's lives.

The theme of this issue is The Healing Power of Music and our cover story introduces Syrian-born Maya Youssef, who reveals the evocative sound of her qanun, a 70-string zither, which she plays to bring back beautiful memories to displaced people.

Healing is also very much part of the Drum Works project which our Managing Director David Foster personally supports – check out the picture of David playing in a 120-drum concert on page 16.

We also talk to double bassist Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE who has done so much great work in creating the Chineke! Orchestra – the junior section includes Sheku Kanneh-Mason, the cellist who played at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

There's a salute to Richard Harrison, who offers promising young musicians access to instruments, and we check in with Youth Music, a charity which invests in music-making projects.

While I am standing in for Gemma Deavall, who is on maternity leave, I am also delighted to confirm that the merger of Aston Scott and Lark has been formally completed. We are now Lark Music, part of Aston Lark Limited.

We have been busy behind the scenes to make sure you continue to receive the high standards of service you have come to expect and for many months we have all been getting to know one another – in fact, a group of Aston Lark ladies recently enjoyed a guided history tour of London – and a stop off for tea! See page 23.

Best wishes



Louise Deacon

Manager, Musical Instruments Division
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Music puts your heart at peace

Maya Youssef fled Syria and, six years on, she is studying for a PhD in the Healing Power of Music. Here she tells **Lesley Bellew** how her 78-string qānūn is a reminder of home

Sound goes straight into your heart and body – and that is why Maya Youssef has never doubted its healing power.

“If I am playing to an audience of refugees from the Middle East, the qānūn is the sound of home,” says Maya, who demonstrates the power and range of music on her 78-stringed instrument, the traditional Middle Eastern plucked zither.

“People say to me ‘We grew up with this sound and through it we can smell our favourite lemon tree, the jasmine, and see images of our home and loved ones’. It can be emotional but also joyful.”

Syrian-born Maya, who left her homeland in 2007, was born in Damascus into a progressive family of writers and artists. She said: “In Syria music is an integral part of people’s lives and also an ancient tradition that goes back thousands of years.”

Maya has played at the Proms and alongside Damon Albarn, but says that a concert at a refugee centre in Denmark was one of her most rewarding.

She said: “At first the audience all had stern, sad faces. All were tired from their burdens, their journey and had experienced trauma. As the concert went on, I noticed a little boy who kept looking at this father.

“The father’s face was deeply sad, but as I continued to play he began swaying, his face was relaxing and as the music continued he started dancing and singing. It was so beautiful.

“In the UK it is the same - the music always brings people back. I intend it to be this way and I ask for healing.

“For others, who have not been exposed to war, the music still brings you back to your heart – and in your heart space you are at peace with yourself, at peace with other people. There is no need to

struggle, no need to push and pull.

“To me, this is the essence of us, humans, where we can tap into peace. The more we do, the more the healing. That’s the truth and power of it.

“Healing has many meanings, whatever the person needs. Emotional music brings back pain and heartbreak but at the same time brings back beautiful memories. I take people on a journey.”

Maya’s own musical journey had an unlikely beginning, and her determination to defy the convention of the qānūn being “a man’s instrument” is typical of her determination to “push boundaries”.

She said: “I always wanted to be a musician. It boils down to two things: the first is sticking with it, the instrument, the music, the life of a musician; the second is being true to myself, even if that means I am constantly challenged by doing something new, wonderful, scary and



SWEET MUSIC: Maya plays the qānūn at The Lemon Tree Trust Garden at RHS Chelsea



“People say to me we grew up with this sound and through it we can smell our favourite lemon tree, the jasmine, and see images of our home and loved ones. It can be emotional but also joyful”

- The qānūn is a trapezoidal-shaped, plucked, wooden zither. The word translates as ‘the law’ as it is the only instrument in the takht (traditional Arabic ensemble) that can play all the notes of Arabic scales on open strings.
- It is regarded as one of the central instruments in the traditional Arabic ensemble, setting the pitch and, across the Arab world, is almost exclusively played by men.
- The bridge is supported on pillars that rest upon tables of skin. It has 78 strings, the majority of nylon or gut, organised in courses of three to each

pitch (the bass strings are brass wound and in courses of two). They are plucked with plectrums made out of turtle shell or plastic, inserted in a ring on each index finger.

- With a range of three and a half octaves, it requires difficult microtonal adjustments: the strings once had to be stopped with the fingernail. This was overcome by the introduction of levers beneath each string: raising them causes the vibrating length of the string to shorten, so that the performer has to make lever adjustments with one hand while continuing to play with the other.

completely out of my comfort zone.”

She grew up hearing music from all over the world, in her father’s collection - Arabic classical, jazz, fusion, Tibetan monks and Western classical – and began studying at the age of seven at the Sulhi al-Wadi Institute of Music in Damascus.

When she was nine her family bought her a violin, which she “reluctantly” agreed to learn – until a taxi ride changed her life.

She said: “We were heading towards the Institute with my mother, and the taxi driver was playing a recording of an enchanting instrument that blew my mind. He told me it was the qānūn. I told him I was determined to learn it. His reply shocked me, but it kindled a flame.

“It was a man’s instrument, he said, played only by men. He advised me to forget about it. I challenged him and said I will learn to play the qānūn! He laughed at me.

“Later that day, as I was sitting in my solfeggio class, the head of the institute walked in and announced the qānūn class was open for enrolment. I enrolled, with the full support of my parents, who replaced my violin with a qānūn.”

At the age of 12 she won the Best Musician award in the Syrian National Music Competition for Youth and continued at the High Institute of Music and Dramatic Arts in Damascus, studying for a BA in Music, specialising in qānūn, while studying for a BA in English Literature at the University of Damascus.

In 2007 Maya moved to Dubai to focus on a solo career, performing at venues including Al Qasba Sarjah, The Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Foundation, and Burj Al Arab, and being interviewed by leading Arabic TV channels.

Two years later she was invited onto the full-time faculty to teach qānūn and theory of Arabic music (maqam) at Oman’s Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat. Maya said: “Performing and teaching in Oman was a wonderful experience. However, I wanted to be in a place where I could engage with musicians and audiences from all over the world.”

She applied for the Arts Council’s Exceptional Talent scheme, where 300 artists from around the world are endorsed migrate to the UK, and is



QĀNŪN QUEST: Maya Youssef began lessons at the age of nine

now taking a PhD at the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), looking at how music can be used as a healing tool, working with Syrian refugee children at camps in Europe.

“The war started in my homeland in 2011. From that point on making music was no longer a choice for me, it was a crucial means to express and come to terms with intense feelings of loss and sadness from seeing my people suffer and my land destroyed.

“On a hot afternoon in London in 2012 I was watching the news. At the time I felt overwhelmed, as if I was going to explode, so I held my qānūn and ‘Syrian Dreams’ came out of me. That was the first piece of music I wrote.”

Maya describes the album as a personal journey through six years of war in Syria. “It is a translation of my memories of home and I put my feelings into music. I see the act of playing music as the opposite of death; it is a life and hope-affirming act, an antidote to what is happening, not only in Syria, but

across the whole world. I like to think that my music brings people back to humanity and to the centre of their hearts, where no harm can be done and where all can exist together in peace.”

Maya Youssef Trio concert dates

- Thursday, September 13, 7pm: The Stables, Milton Keynes
- Sunday, September 23, 7pm: Ropetackle, Portslade-by-sea
- Thursday, September 27, 7pm: Howard Assembly Room, Opera North, Leeds
- Friday, September 28, 7pm: Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff
- Tuesday, October 9, 7pm: St George’s, Bristol
- Friday, October 12, 2018, 7pm: The National Centre of Early Music, York

For more dates and details visit mayayoussef.com

LARKmusic



Perfectly tuned insurance

Because helping even the youngest musician strikes a chord with us

Our Music policy has been carefully designed to allow you to enjoy playing your instrument with complete peace of mind, whatever your age. Lark Music is focused on protecting your possessions and supporting the musical arts.

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Power of Love

Tension, humour, terror, gentleness ... Patricia Kopatchinskaja's concert at Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh, in June was the definitive expression of what critics mean by an "electrifying" performance.

The Lark-supported evening with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra gave the audience a privileged insight into the charisma of an artist described by Daily Telegraph classical music critic Ivan Hewett as the "inexplicable wild child of the violin".

And yet, 15 minutes after the applause had died, almost as much with emotional exhaustion as appreciation, the artist calmly insisted, while she talked over dinner with David Foster and Julie Webb, that the fortune was hers, in being able to communicate so directly and dramatically through her music.

"I always feel privileged and blessed to be able to do what I really love," said Patricia. "And real love is so overwhelmingly powerful, it captures you fully, in an almost animal way.

"It is the only way to use it as energy if one disappears in this love, in the music.

"Everyone knows what it is like to fall in love - I compare the transformation on stage to this almost insane state of spirit. To be on stage means to make yourself vulnerable, ultra-sensitive, listen with every cell and dialogue with everyone.

"The orchestra and I don't create the magic, the music itself is magic, and when we are open to it, and let it come, it is with us."

As for her ability to find relaxation after such an intense performance, that featured Stravinsky's Suite from The Soldier's Tale, Bartók's Divertimento for Strings and Ligeti's Violin Concerto, she added: "From a subjective point of view an interpretation is 'satisfying' or 'good' if you can give a piece everything that you have – your energy, your fantasy, your love.

"I often say that you have to become the piece. That's what we are trained for and strive for. And if it's a big piece like the Ligeti concerto, then after the performance there is just nothing left,



‘WILD CHILD’: Electrifying violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja

exhaustion, everything gone, including adrenaline. Then you can only try to recharge your batteries with a good meal and good friends."

Born in Moldova, Patricia moved with her family, as a schoolgirl, to Austria, where she studied at the Vienna Academy of Music and, now 41, has a repertoire ranging from baroque to the newest commissions.

In a prolific recording career, her status as one of the world's most innovative classical artists was underlined by a 2017 Grammy Award for her typically groundbreaking recording, with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, of Death

and the Maiden, blending Schubert's original work with music by other composers.

Her latest season of concerts began with the world premiere, at the Lucerne Festival, of her Dies Irae project, inspired by the Latin Requiem Mass and Gregorian chant, and she has plenty of plans for future creativity and collaborations.

She said: "I am looking forward to a partnership with Camerata Bern. Our first project will be a staged concert entitled Time and Eternity. It's a sort of spiritual meditation in a 700-year-old church, with candles, organ and video projection. Three priests from different religions will speak between pieces.

"With Kirill Petrenko and his Munich Staatsorchester we take the challenge of Schönberg's Violin Concerto, and we also perform this with his Berlin Philharmonic.

"In preparation I learned and performed the voice part of Schönberg's Pierrot lunaire because it's there that he developed his new language.

"This autumn we will tour and record with Il Giardino Armonico and Giovanni Antonini. These are musicians who I have adored and admired for two decades. We will tackle Vivaldi but I convinced them to mix it with new works by Italian composers especially written for the occasion.

"For 2019 we have the world premiere of Michel van der Aa's double concerto for violin and cello with Sol Gabetta, two new violin concertos by Marton Illes and Francisco Coll and a new ensemble piece by Michael Hersch."

If that's not going to keep her busy, Patricia also has ambitions to work further with Pierrot lunaire, on "a poetic film, giving some context on where Pierrot came from and where he went," and has already made, with friends, a film of the first movement of Kurt Schwitters' Dadaistic nonsense poem Ursonate, which she would like to complete with the other three movements.

Considering the broad theme of the Healing Power of Music in this issue of LARKmusic, Patricia reflected: "Music



CLASS ACT: Patricia with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra at Snape Maltings in June *Pictures: Beki Smith*

► can relate us to spiritual powers and worlds but this is a delicate relationship and too much talking probably could spoil whatever there is.

"There is the film from Mongolia about a camel rejecting a newborn baby. Then they fetch a musician who plays for days on his violin until the camel mother dissolves in tears and accepts the baby. This is a traditional method there."

"Otherwise I am married to a physician and I am told that music, while important, will probably not heal jaundice, pneumonia or cancer."

Patricia certainly believes in encouraging a love of music among children, but is aware of the funding issues facing music teaching in the UK, and the difficulty many children have in gaining access to instruments.

She said: "We musicians should be in contact with children as often as possible and help schools however we can.

“Music is magic, and when we are open to it, and let it come, it is with us”

"A Hungarian musician told me that in Western Europe the weakest teachers look after the beginners, whereas in Hungary it's the best ones. Children deserve the best in everything they are interested in."

Her own music is created with an 1834 violin by Giovanni Francesco Pressenda, who worked in Torino, and whose Italian and French influences she appreciates. "His violins often have a unique, viola-like sound in the lower

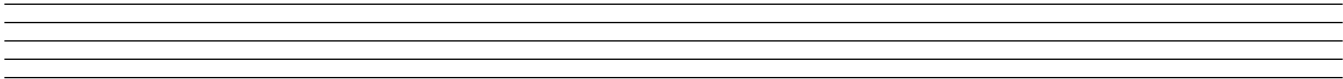
registers, which I love. I would not exchange this violin for a more famous or expensive instrument.

"As a bow I mostly use my Tourte Bow. Tourte was originally a watchmaker and the inventor of the modern violin bow during the French revolution. This bow is a thoroughbred horse, does everything before you think, very fast and reactive."

Among Patricia's interests outside music is a love of cooking, another area in which she exercises a particular creativity.

She suggests: "Make a normal Italian risotto, with rice, onions, olive oil, bouillon and, at the end, instead of adding Parmesan, add Taleggio cheese and pieces of slightly boiled pears. Nobody knows about this!"

Like her innovative approach to music, that sounds like a taste well worth acquiring.



You can't be what you can't see

Chineke! founder Chi-chi Nwanoku explains how the orchestra's diversity has created a sense of belonging for its young musicians

There is a thought that you can not be what you can not see," says Chi-chi Nwanoku, founder of Chineke! – Europe's first orchestra composed of a majority of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) musicians.

Chineke! also champions music by composers Chi-chi says have been "written out of history" and she is happy to see diversity not just within the orchestra but also in its audiences.

After the orchestra's debut at Wigmore Hall, which included music by Florence Price, the first African-American woman to break through as a symphonic composer, Chi-chi said: "Wigmore Hall director John Gilhooly was thrilled. He wrote to me to say that he had never seen such diversity at a Wigmore concert."

The orchestra's repertoire of BME composers, alongside standard orchestral pieces, was enthusiastically received on its debut at last year's BBC Proms, while one of its young cellists, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, has earned worldwide renown as BBC Young Musician of the Year 2016, and as a soloist at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

Chi-chi said: "When creating the Chineke! orchestra, and junior orchestra as a sister organisation, it was to create a

At the end of the first day nobody wanted to go home

pathway. The juniors are the pipeline – the Chineke! Juniors always have a project that takes place around the same time as the professional Chineke! orchestra.

"From Day One our professional players mentor every section of the junior orchestra; the strings, wind, brass, harps and percussion. The young people are now familiar with having tutors and mentors who look like them, whereas none of us seniors ever had anything like that.

"Within a short space of time, the Chineke! Juniors had the sense and vision of themselves as part of the classical music industry, because for the first time they had teachers and mentors who they could relate to ethnically as well as musically.

"Because we live in such a visual world, where everyone has access to a screen, people are very affected by this and

influenced. There is a notion you can not be what you can not see – the day the professionals and the juniors walked in to our first rehearsals and became part of an orchestra that ranged from black to white, with everything in between, there was an immediate sense of belonging.

"Up until that moment, no two of these players of colour were used to playing together. Something happened in that room, and from that moment on, an invisible bond had formed and wrapped itself around every one of us. We had each become part of not just 'a.n.other' orchestra but part of a shared philosophy and commitment to a mission of positive action to develop our classical musical industry into one that truly belonged to the 21st century, where inclusion and representation is paramount."

"At end of first day nobody wanted to go home and it was the same with the juniors, they all enjoyed being in that room. We've already created a generation of young people walking into this industry knowing it was for them.

"Sheku won the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition six months after our first Chineke! concert, and in the following competition in 2018 four more of our juniors reached the category finals. ➤



ONWARDS AND UPWARDS: Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE still fighting for funds so Chineke! can offer more diverse music

➤ "I do not think that is a coincidence. It had never happened before, therefore it says to us all that Chineke! orchestra is giving people visual proof, belief and encouragement in what they can be.

"We have several projects each year and are looking forward to having the resources to have residential courses for our junior players, conductors and composers. Part of my philosophy is that the orchestra must not be London-centric, because the diversity issue is global.

"You could take any small town in the country. The musician may be the only black child in their class and in their youth orchestra. I am not saying they automatically do not feel welcome but, in some way or other, they often do not truly feel at home or that they fully belong, and have felt at some point that their colour may be getting in the way. They need to feel part of an organisation where they are not the odd one out. In Chineke! nobody feels they are the odd one out.

"As well as music from the 'great canon' we ensure that in every concert we play music that has been written by a

composer of 'relative ethnicity' that stands alongside Beethoven and the like. Too many composers have been written out of history for the wrong reasons, and we are doing all we can to rectify this. It educates us, and the audiences who listen to it. It also enriches the repertoire in every way imaginable. So much is changing. So you can be, what you can see."

The future

Despite generous donations, including backing from Andrew Lloyd Webber, Chi-chi feels Chineke! could have even more to offer, if only suitable financing could be found.

She said: "There are wonderful people who recognise the impact of our work but until we are funded properly we can not fulfil our potential.

"We apply for grants from the Arts Council, and charities such as the Foyle Foundation, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and Cockayne, and have generous individual donors. In order to fulfil many of the burning issues we have to tackle we realistically need £500,000 annually to fulfil the demands on us."

The healing of power of music

Chi-chi can endorse the Lark Music theme from personal experience. She said: "I've always thought music is medicine. There are few places where you can express your feelings and music is one of those places into which you can pour your emotions. I was devastated when each of my parents passed away but was able to find an outlet for my grief when playing my double bass.

"I have an incredible double bass that I bought from Francis Baines. He used to call it 'my old lady' and would tie it to the car roof with thick gut strings. The 'old lady' was even parked Left Luggage at Victoria Station when he was living on a leaky barge in Chelsea.

"He was a one-off, my mentor, and we had such fun. The day Francis died I took the instrument and his favourite bow and just sat in my music room and played some Bach, a beautiful bass line, and it felt like a fitting way to pay my utmost respects to him, as I shed some tears and said goodbye."

For Chineke! concert dates and details visit chineke.org



Lark Music is proud to support Youth Music, a charity that invests in music-making projects for children and young people experiencing challenging circumstances





MUSICAL YOUTH

Youth Music is a charity that invests in music-making projects for children and young people experiencing challenging circumstances – and we thought our readers would enjoy these wonderful pictures!

Lark Music managing director David Foster attended a Youth Create Day at St Luke's, Islington, part of a programme run by the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) and funded by Youth Music.

Young disabled people from East London made new music and enjoyed performances by the orchestra in the first of a series of taster workshops. The children also gained valuable opportunities to make friends and develop social skills, as well as exploring their creative and musical potential.

David said he was 'thrilled' to see the young visitors try their hand at group music-making. He added: "Although the young visitors had not met each other before they were soon full of smiles and enjoying music-making with range of instruments and technology.

"We at Lark Music know music education can really add to a child's development so it was a privilege to be able to support this innovative work and see how the children responded to the LSO's musicians."

Philip Chandler, of the LSO, said the event was "a fantastic demonstration of inclusive music-making". He said: "As part of the LSO's Musical Inclusion programme, our Youth Create Days provide inspiring opportunities for children and young people with learning disabilities to engage in music, many for the very first time.

"The LSO has a longstanding commitment to ensuring music is accessible to all young people, and we are extremely grateful to have Youth Music's generous support towards this vital area of our work."



HAVING A BASH



Can you spot Lark Music's David Foster playing at a Drum Works' event in Barking Town Square? That's him, third row from front with the grey baseball cap!

David said: "I've played a few times, and the event in Barking, alongside another 120 drummers, was amazing and dynamic. The drumming was so loud but the audience's reaction was spine-tingling."

David became involved in 2014 when he met the Drum Works team at a creative entrepreneurs' evening. He said: "It was a bit like Dragons' Den for creative projects, where Drum Works was looking for funding."

"I loved the concept but they were getting to the stage where they needed to be financially independent of the Barbican and self-sustaining as a project."

"They wanted trustees so, being in business, and being a drummer, I was a natural fit."

My dream is to create a mini ideal society where everyone at Drum Works is engaged and developing personally while supporting those around them

Jo Wills, co-founder

The smallest child will always go for the biggest drum – and you could say that’s an appropriate metaphor for the growing ambition of an extraordinary, and noisy, musical project.

Drum Works, founded 11 years ago by musicians Jo Wills and Ross McDouall, creates drumming experiences for up to 500 youngsters every week, as well as spectacular mass performances.

The message behind the mission statement, to use drumming “to inspire creativity, build social cohesion and empower young people to direct their own futures,” is that the music can encourage self-development among youngsters who might lack confidence or social skills – literally bashing out

their frustrations as they play.

Artistic Director Jo Wills (pictured conducting in main image on pages 16-17), a composer and bass player, whose CV includes commissions for the BBC and collaborations with rock musician Brian Eno and choreographer Tom Dale, said: “My dream for Drum Works is to create a mini ideal society where everyone is engaged and developing personally while supporting everyone around them.

“We have all demographics, all age ranges, all working with and learning from each other. Students have told me that creating music together helps them understand each other. They concentrate on a team approach and they are open with each other.”

Experienced leaders guide the regular music-making sessions that develop confidence, creativity, social skills, concentration, individuality and group work. Guest artists who have contributed include music producer Dave Smith, a drummer for former Led Zeppelin singer Robert Plant.

The project is supported by six schools in East London, and two senior drumming ensembles, and its various groups come together at least once a year for huge, exuberant, collective performances.

A report by market researchers Kantar TNS quoted a 13-year-old player who said: “Drum Works helps people break out their souls. Some are really quiet and timid and then they realise that they can really shine,” while the parent of a 17-year-old said: “It’s like watching a different child – she loses herself in the music and she’s so much more confident in the group.”

Jo said: “When Ross and I started we could not have dreamed the impact. We were finishing a leadership masters’ programme at The Guildhall when we were asked to deliver outreach around performances by a band from Brazil.

“The music, broadly samba, wasn’t familiar to kids here, though. Growing up in a favela is markedly different.

“We found that the kids wanted to play and write their own music, to beats they liked and using the influences of what they listened to – dance music, hip-hop and grime – music that spoke to them. That’s how we started, using Brazilian equipment.”

They soon noted that the youngsters would gravitate towards instruments ➤



I’VE GOT RHYTHM: Every age group puts their heart and soul into the music

➤ they wanted to try. “Funnily, the smallest kid will always go to the biggest drum,” said Jo. “I tell them ‘if your waist is lower than the drum you can’t play it around your waist’ but kids automatically want to go for the big drum.”

Students who want to progress can join the senior ensembles and even go on to work placements and professional development.

Jo is particularly pleased that some who engaged in the project’s early days, when it was based at The Barbican, are still involved, and that children who joined at 11 are now at The Guildhall, or university, and returning to help the next generation.

He said: “Seeing people flourish is special. Some go into performing and some into music college. The project made them understand that music was an option.

“We would talk to a school about kids who would benefit most, depending on issues with school engagement, musical talent, personal challenges and lack of

access to formal training.

“We did put energy into targeting kids who needed that outreach and opportunity, who were having a tough time. Recently we’ve been doing work with an autism specialist school and we ran a project with deaf children.

“We’ve seen people develop on all levels, from some kids just being able to stay in a room longer or learning how to solve problems in life.”

One of the cornerstones of Drum Works is that the youngsters are encouraged to create their own rhythms, rather than simply being told what to play.

Jo said: “Musically, we keep getting better. People grow and know how to evolve and create. They spark off each other and come in with more interesting ways of composing and arranging. Everyone is quicker to share ideas and be inspired. There is a transformative impact.”

The mother of one child, Eddie, told Jo she did not think the boy would still be

in school without Drum Works; but he stopped his frequent fighting and his concentration and grades improved to the point that now, in Year 11, he is one of the project’s ‘Lead Learners’.

The standard school project costs £18,000 to reach 100 children over a year, so finding the money to avoid having to drop programmes is a constant challenge.

Jo said: “Kids care so much they have tried to help – they’ve offered to write, and busk – but 15-year-olds can’t raise £18,000. We’ve got amazing tutor and leader teams and they are great role models but they do need paying as they are working musicians.

“They need to know all the material, and all four drum parts, and play just like that. We need fast-learning, knowledgeable leaders who can change drums at any stage and be that adaptable immediately. It’s quite a skill.”

Visit drumworks.co.uk



BEAT IT: Working together proves a sound education



Well, what a summer it has been with sunshine all the way from the Gower Festival to Glynebourn. It's been so busy that I've filled four pages in this issue of LARKmusic!

At Glyndebourne it was a thrill to watch the dress rehearsal for Giuliano Cesare by Handel, David McVicar's much-loved production which made a triumphant return to the summer festival.

Over on the Gower Peninsula the excitement was electrifying as Menuhin Competition prizewinner Nathan Mierdl, 19, flew in from Geneva to play at St Cattwg's Church, in Port Eynon.

Nathan's competition prize of 10,000 Swiss Francs and 20 concert dates was outshone by the surprise two-year loan of a Golden Period Stradivarius.

Gower Festival artistic director Gordon Back, who also runs the Menuhin Competition, revealed Nathan would be playing the violin for the first time at Gower. The audience was completely enthralled by the recital.

The festival goes from strength to strength as Gordon continues to attract some of the greatest names in classical music – from Karl Jenkins to harpist Catrin Finch. The Welsh community loves the two-week festival and makes visitors feel very welcome – in fact, we have made many new friends and can't wait to return in 2019.

Visit gowerfestival.com

More young talent

While all eyes were on the Gold Coast of Australia for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, another group of young antipodeans in London were proving world-class.

At the elaborate Leighton House Museum, off High Street Kensington, an evening of music supported by The Tait Memorial Trust saw young Australian and New Zealander musicians perform an exciting programme linked to the theme of dance.

Presented by New Zealand musical director Ross Alley, 'Dancing from the Salon' brought together piano accompanist Chad Vindin, soprano Samantha Crawford and mezzo-soprano



GOLDEN SMILE: Nathan Mierdl with his Golden Period Stradivarius

Bronte Zemlic, Guildhall School oboist Madeleine Randall, Royal College of Music violinist Iona Allen, Royal Academy of Music violinist Courtenay Cleary and classical guitarist Andrey Lebedev – another star of the Gower Festival!

With a unique joie de vivre the talented young musicians entertained the audience with lively scores from Ivor Novello to Benjamin Britten, as well as Bizet's Carmen and Ross Edwards' White Cockatoo Spirit Dance.

I thoroughly enjoyed the musical link between the dance themes but was also thrilled to be in Leighton House, somewhere which has been on my visit list for so long.

Visit taitmemorialtrust.org and rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/museums/leightonhousemuseum.aspx

More young talent shone through at the London Symphony Orchestra's ECHO Rising Stars concert at St Luke's music centre. Luxembourg-born percussionist Christoph Sietzen, who is on the cusp of a major international career, played a new work by Stewart Copeland, of The Police. It was great to be there!

Royal College of Music

The Royal College of Music continues to be an important friend of Lark Music. The Patron's evening with the Ognisko Harlem Quartet playing Beethoven and amazing jazz from Dizzy Gillespie and Billy Strayhorn put a spring in my step while I was also honoured to watch HRH The Prince of Wales present Sir Andras Schiff with a Doctorate of Music, and a Fellowship to Professor Robert Winston.

It was also a delight to watch the Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra led by world-renowned conductor Bernard Haitink. Pianist Martin James Bartlett, who has just graduated with top honours, opened the concert with Mozart's Piano Concerto no 24 in C minor. It is considered one of the composer's greatest works and Martin did it justice.

Watching RCM student Jamal Aliev's career grow is so rewarding and at his Wigmore Hall recital he demonstrated why he is set to become one of the

MUSICAL NOTES

News from Julie Webb

Private Client Director



FROM OVER THE POND: Julie Webb talks to Tom Morris of the Boston and Cleveland Orchestras. Below, clockwise from top left, Dancing in the Salon with Andrey Lebedev, Iona Allan, soprano Samantha Crawford and Ross Alley





MUSICAL NOTES

News from Julie Webb
Private Client Director



► greatest cellists of his generation. Jamal's music feeds my soul.

A Lark Music evening recital at the RCM featured Roberto Ruisi on violin and soprano Julieth Lozano alongside our Lark Scholar, cellist Wallis Power (see page 24) playing Debussy. It was a magical evening looking out over the Royal Albert Hall.

Former Lark Scholar Renate Sokolovska keeps in touch and the Talent Unlimited concert at St James's, in Piccadilly, featured the premiere of her partner George Stephenson's composition 'Ookpik'.

Anniversary celebrations

Lark Music continues to support the inventive London Sinfonietta, which celebrated its 50th anniversary with a concert at the Southbank and we enjoyed the company of virtuoso violinist Gyorgy Pauk, who played with the London Sinfonietta 50 years ago. We are also privileged to support the Endellion String Quartet, who are heading towards their 40th anniversary.

Aldeburgh Festival

Being involved with the Aldeburgh Festival is another important feature

of our work and the Lark Music-supported concert with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, at Snape Maltings, was a mind-blowing experience (as featured on pages 8-9).

After the concert I met Tom Morris, artistic director of Boston and Cleveland orchestras, who talked about staying in Kent for many happy summers and his friendship with Pierre Boulez.

Tom has had the most incredible career but his link to Aldeburgh is really important to him.



TIME OUT: Aston Lark and Handelsbanken clients enjoy an afternoon Pashley Manor Gardens and, above, Simon Whitehouse shares the secrets of the City of London with Aston Lark ladies

Work, play, listen hard

The ladies from Aston Lark found plenty in common during an afternoon tour and tea in London's Square Mile, enjoying time to learn more about our great city and more about our shared interests!

Blue Badge guide Simon Whitehouse gave our group a fascinating tour of the financial district pointing out iconic buildings such as the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England, set against ever-higher new towers,

while revealing 2,000 years of history.

Architect Christopher Wren's exquisite St Stephen Walbrook Church, near the new Bloomberg building, intrigued us most. Here we learned that Wren never used stained glass as he preferred light to pour into his buildings. We also loved the later addition – an altar designed by sculptor Henry Moore.

The church survived the World War II Blitz but was surrounded by bomb sites for years and it was here that the Samaritans was founded.

Pashley Manor Gardens

A wonderful sunny afternoon at Pashley Manor Gardens with Aston Lark clients and friends from Handelsbanken went down a treat. There was plenty of time to network and catch up with news as well as enjoying a tour with the head gardener – and a slap-up tea.

If you want to get in touch contact me at Julie.Webb@astonlark.com

Julie

RHS Chelsea alive with sounds of music



The evocative sound of Ralph Vaughan Williams' 'The Lark Ascending' caught our attention at RHS Chelsea 2018.

Williams, a descendant of the Wedgwood family, was honoured by violinist Sally Potterton, above, who played the piece in the beautiful gold medal-winning Wedgwood Garden, designed by Jo Thompson.

Music – although playing second fiddle to the gardens – wove its way throughout the London showground.

In the Main Avenue romantic sounds wafted from the Spirit of Cornwall garden, with six musicians, including a harpist, and dancers from Constella Opera Ballet performing a specially written piece by composer Leo Geyer.

More opera came from The Pearl

Fishers Opera with singer Sarah Lenney and clarinettist Poppy Bedoe bringing further attention John Warland's Pearlfisher Garden which highlighted how plastic is killing our oceans.

At the other end of the scale, there was plenty oompah from a Yorkshire Brass band on the popular Welcome to Yorkshire Garden while British rapper Professor Green officially opened the RHS Feel Good Garden.

Students from the Norfolk Taal-Rasa-Bhaua Dance Academy also brought the Grand Pavilion alive wearing colourful traditional Indian dress to show off their culture and music.

And as featured in our cover story, Maya Youssef also filled the air with music from her 78-string zither in the Lemon Tree Trust Garden.

LOVING the personal touch

Until Wallis Power joined the Royal College of Music she had never realised playing cello in an orchestra would be such an enjoyable experience.

When conductor Bernard Haitink came to the RCM in February, Wallis was chosen to be in the orchestra.

Wallis, who joined the RCM after studying at Cambridge, said: "It was so inspiring to play alongside so many other musicians, with an average age of 20, led by such a renowned conductor. He had turned down the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to be at the RCM and, as the rehearsals went on, I could feel myself improving."

A "huge fan" of chamber music, she added: "Playing in an orchestra can be taxing and takes long hours but the project with Bernard was so awe-inspiring. It was the most professional orchestra I had ever taken part in. It was a turning point. Now I am assured orchestral playing is something I would like to do and it offers great opportunities."

The niece of viola virtuoso Lawrence Power, Wallis grew up in Plymouth with her mother, a clarinet teacher, and, having begun violin playing at about the age of six, achieved Grade 2 with merit despite never feeling fully comfortable with the instrument. She also learned piano – "piano does stay with you, so that is always useful" – but did not begin the cello until moving to High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, at the age of seven.

She said: "My grandma suggested the cello and I went to the local music centre for three or four years. I really took to the cello."

"I never knew music could be a career and there is no obvious route. Mentally it is hard. However, my uncle Lawrence is a huge inspiration, being so successful."



SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES: Wallis Power is enjoying life at the RCM

Settling happily in High Wycombe, she took her mother's advice to follow the example of her uncle, and aunt, in studying at the junior Guildhall School,

to which she gained a scholarship.

"My granddad would drive me there every Saturday, and I made good



Finding interests away from the long hours of practice, and with a desire to travel more, Wallis enjoys taking photos on her mobile phone, which she shares on her Instagram account, featuring everyday scenes like cafes and her favourite places to go. She said: "I don't use Instagram for music-related events or self-promotion, it's just a bit of positivity every day and people find it very calming."

Instagram: wallis-p-

“I wouldn't be able to come to college without Lark's support and I am grateful they are so active”

► friends. At school I was not into sport or dancing so I never felt that okay talking about music as it was not such a 'cool' thing.

"I also have an unusual name. I just wanted to fit in and be normal but you realise these can be your strengths. My mum has always been most supportive and motivating. She suggested applying to Cambridge and I went to mini lectures and sessions in Oxbridge-style which made me more confident. I am an only child, which socially can make you doubt yourself with no role model of your own age."

Choosing Cambridge over a specialist music college was a challenging decision, but one which she is happy to have taken. She said: "Not many people get a chance to go to Cambridge and I love writing and the analytical side of music. It's important to be a well-rounded academic and being around non-musicians brings a varied group of friends, from disciplines like medicine

and maths. "It was stressful at exam time – finals was the most stressful period of my life, balancing cello practice with revision but I think it has made me appreciate everything so much more. I am playing catch-up at the RCM but I also use what I learnt at Cambridge in this environment.

"I wouldn't be able to come to college without Lark Music's support and I am grateful they are so active. They attend recitals and events which is such a lovely, personal touch. You don't always get that. Bringing music to audiences is the nicest experiences and Lark events host the most interesting people.

"Not only has Lark made it possible for me to study at the RCM, but it has provided me with personally tailored support and encouragement throughout my musical journey here."

Those opportunities at the RCM have inspired Wallis's ambitions to join outreach programmes 'to share the joy of music' with youngsters who might not otherwise have exposure to it. She also teaches chamber and orchestral music. She said: "Working to put across ideas to different ages, eight-13, makes you learn about yourself, too. Some kids want to do music but, with no support or the right environment, they are at a disadvantage so I would like to help.

Julie Webb said: "It has been delightful to see Wallis blossom before our eyes, accomplishing more and more each time we see her perform."

Professional orchestral work

- St Endellion Summer Music Festival (2015-)
- West Wycombe Chamber Music Festival (2016-)
- London Young Sinfonia (2017-2018)
- Klosters Music Festival (Winter, 2017)
- Orchestral training
- Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra, principal (2016)
- RCM Symphony Orchestra (2017-18)
- Chamber music
- West Road Concert Hall (Cambridge, 2015- Aether Piano Trio)
- Fitzwilliam Museum Gallery 3 (Cambridge, 2015- Aether Piano Quintet)
- Midsummer Music Festival (2017)
- London Month of the Dead Festival (Dissenters Chapel, 2017- Thanatos String Quartet)
- Stamford International Music Festival (Spring 2018)
- Solo
- Trinity Chapel, Cambridge – Vivaldi Concerto for 2 Cellos in G minor (2016)
- Solo recitals in Pembroke, Sidney Sussex and Gonville and Caius college chapels, Cambridge (2014-17)
- Lark Insurance recital, Parry Rooms, Royal College of Music (2017-)
- Awards
- Full scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music (Junior Department)
- Instrumental Award from Cambridge University (2014-17)
- Lark insurance scholarship, supported by an Arthur Bliss scholarship (RCM 2017-19)
- Education and qualifications
- LRSM Cello Performance Diploma (obtained in 2014)
- BA (Hons) Music, University of Cambridge (2014-17)
- MPerf in Cello Performance, RCM (2017-19)

Helping hand rewards talent

Turn to your right, turn to your left and talk to somebody – that's the etiquette at the Wigmore Hall, in London, and there must be many a story to come from those conversations

When Richard Harrison got chatting with violinist Louise Williams, before a lunchtime concert, he was astonished to learn how difficult it was for a musician like her to obtain a suitable instrument.

String players at a conservatoire may be able to borrow a fine instrument during the years of their studies but, after leaving, often find their own is simply inadequate for the concerts, auditions and competitions.

Of course, an instrument of sufficient quality for a professional career is often unaffordable for young players. Music-lover Richard saw an opportunity to

create a charity, providing good-quality instruments for young musicians to borrow.

He started by buying three violins, and now has a collection of 44 fine old Italian, French, Dutch and English violins and one viola, plus five bows.

The Harrison-Frank Family Foundation was set up in 2014 and all the instruments have been acquired in collaboration with violin experts J&A Beare, who has helped to set up, maintain and run the scheme.

Richard said: "We would like to have 60 violins and 20 bows. I am very grateful to Simon Morris at J&A Beare for

the support and ensuring the charity acquires the instruments at good prices. We have an excellent relationship which I really appreciate."

The violins range in value – three are valued at £20,000; 10 at £40,000 and six at £60,000 – and are lent according to each student's ability. They are kept in London by J&A Beare and, once loaned out, have to be returned once a year to ensure the instrument is in good order, re-assessed for insurance purposes and has a passport for overseas travel.

Among the foundation's many successes was the victory for two of its beneficiaries in last year's Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition, where violinists Colin Scobie and George Smith were members of the triumphant Maxwell Quartet.

Colin has been loaned an instrument by Paolo Castello, from Genoa c.1770, and George another by Bernardus Calcanius, Genoa c.1740, and a bow by Albert Nurnberger from 1930.

American-born Richard learned to play the violin at a young age in the USA. He said: "It was the thing that middle-class people did, send their children to music lessons. We lived in a mill town -producing town where my father was a pharmacist and well-connected. I am almost ashamed to say that we lived well during World War II.

"I was sent to grammar school and my life was a far cry from that of my grandparents. They were East European immigrants who arrived in the US



ONE CHAT LEADS TO CHARITY: Ina Wiecezorek, Louise Williams, Richard Harrison and Simon Morris

I loved music but I was never going to be a brilliant musician

with eight children. When I went to their house I could smell the poverty. I knew from a very young age that I never wanted to be in such a position. I wanted to have a secure living and worked really hard from the beginning. I loved music but was never going to be a brilliant musician so I studied business."

In 1962 he moved to Paris, leaving his wife and two children with his mother for two months while he found a job. He said: "I was very ambitious and my career led me to London, where I feel is now home."

Richard, now a naturalised UK citizen, has earned the charity dual status, in the UK and US. Loans are arranged annually, with the option of extending up to five years, until the musician is established and earning enough to think of buying their own violin. The instrument can then be released to lend

again to another qualifying applicant.

Applicants need to be UK citizens or at least planning to stay in England for the next five years, recently graduated or in the last year of college, and aged no more than 30.

After the initial contact, they are asked to send a CV and an mp4 recording or video link showcasing their playing, and may then be invited to an interview.

Successful musicians are obliged to arrange insurance with Lark Music before collecting the instrument from J&A Beare.

The charity expects beneficiaries to provide updates on career developments and invitations, if possible, to any performance they may give in London. Candidates may be asked to play once or twice a year in a charitable event organised by the trust.

Having established the charity, Richard is hoping to put it in safe, new hands, finding an administrator to work with the trustees and oversee matters like tax returns.

Could you be that person? If so please visit harrisonfrankfoundation.com or email inawieczorek@beares.com

Special event

Richard Harrison has only occasionally met the musicians who borrow his foundation's instruments so Lark Music is arranging a musical evening where the young violinists will play a thank-you concert for Richard.

If you are interested in attending please contact Julie Webb at julie.webb@astonlark.com



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: Instrument loans for young musicians

Quills, Hammers and Tangents

Conductor and keyboard player **Julian Perkins** introduces us to the varied delights of early keyboard instruments

Ideally keyboard players would need over 100 instruments properly to reflect historical reality. This is especially true for those of us who tackle the rich menagerie of pre-piano keyboard instruments.

Broadly speaking, Bach's French Suites don't have to be played on the harpsichord, and Haydn's keyboard sonatas work equally well on the harpsichord, fortepiano or clavichord. Such composers thrived within a culture of pragmatic plurality; people played keyboard music on whatever instrument was to hand.

Artistically, this brings different qualities to the music. The birds' quills that pluck the strings of the

harpsichord, spinet or virginals give a brilliance to the sound; the hammers that strike the strings of the fortepiano or square piano (actually rectangular) enable greater changes of volume; the metal blades (called tangents) that press up against the strings of the clavichord can endow the musical line with a beguiling intimacy.

The harpsichord is a great vehicle for the gregarious musician. As seen below, it usually featured in ensembles as an accompanying instrument.

Keyboard instruments were especially popular in the home, and Samuel Pepys gives a touching account of multiple households loading 'a pair of Virginalls' on to boats when escaping the Great

Fire of London in 1666.

Tunes from the theatre were readily available in keyboard arrangements for domestic consumption, and a lady's education was considered complete only when she could partake in the social delights of chamber music-making in the respectable demeanour of an accompanist.

Although there is a voluminous and significant solo keyboard repertoire dating from Elizabethan times, it was only with the epic cadenza in Bach's fifth Brandenburg Concerto that the harpsichord transmogrified, like 'Tubby the Tuba', from being a group's harmonic and rhythmic backbone to a solo instrument on a par with the violin. ➤



IN KEY; Above left, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his sisters in front of Kew Palace. Philip Mercier (1733) Above right, A Woman playing a Clavichord. Gerrit Dou (c1665)



Mozart with his sister Maria Anna (or "Nannerl") and father Leopold at a fortepiano, underneath a portrait of his deceased mother Anna Maria. Johann Nepomuk della Croce (c1780)

- This game-changer of 1721 surely paved the way for the development of the solo piano concerto in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

That said, the keyboard continued to be used as a domestic jukebox throughout the eighteenth century and beyond, with an abundance of music for the blossoming amateur market.

It is perhaps surprising to us that the harpsichord co-existed and competed with the fortepiano throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century, but it was only when iron frames replaced wooden ones in the early nineteenth century that fortepianos morphed into sonorous pianos, overpowering the harpsichord.

Despite the contradictory nomenclature, pianos (as opposed to fortes) now had the structure to maintain a high string tension, giving them the horsepower to be heard in large spaces. The concert hall was then becoming part of the social fabric, and it was the piano that could hold its own in solo concertos with orchestras.

Private music-making had its own heroine – by comparison something of a Cinderella. But the unassuming clavichord ravishes one with its dulcet tones.

If the harpsichord was the hare – dazzling the public before fizzling out at the end of the eighteenth century – the clavichord was the tortoise that continued to plod along in private

Unique in the early keyboard family for its capacity to create vibrato, it was used throughout the Renaissance and Baroque periods primarily as a study instrument.

Its zenith came in Germany in the late eighteenth century where it was the ideal medium for expressing the empfindsamer Stil ('expressive style') as epitomized in many of the keyboard works of J. S. Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel.

If the harpsichord was the hare – dazzling the public before fizzling out at the end of the eighteenth century – the clavichord was the tortoise that continued to plod along in private.

Mozart allegedly composed La Clemenza di Tito on a travel clavichord whilst en route between Vienna and Prague, and composers as diverse as Carl Nielsen, Malcolm Arnold and Peter Maxwell Davies owned one of these diminutive seductresses.

Even though I haven't mentioned organs, I hope these musings have alerted you to the abundance of riches to which early keyboard players had access.

Just as one might resist wearing only one set of clothes, we keyboard players can avoid instrumental monogamy by embracing the sheer diversity of our tradition.

In doing so, we refresh and deepen our love for a wealth of music – not only for ourselves, but also for our audiences.

About Julian

Julian Perkins is Artistic Director of Cambridge Handel Opera and Founder Director of Sounds Baroque. He has also started a series of short videos that feature original keyboard instruments. Visit julianperkins.com

Risk management

by Senior Account
Handler **Fay Watts**

Missing a note is one thing. Losing an instrument is a calamity of far greater cost and consequence. Of course, you will treasure and protect your valuable property when it is in your possession, but Lark Music has found that musicians often fail to consider the implications of loaning their instrument to other players.

We know of multi-million-pound instruments lent to people who have no alarm or safe, or live in a rented room in a multiple occupancy house. If it was a piece of jewellery worth the same amount there is no way most insurers would cover it - but we always look for a solution.

In some cases our security requirement is a safe or gun cabinet, or an internally lockable room, as we know alarms aren't practical in flats or apartments, where many players may live. Funnily enough, having a dog has also helped in some cases, which is perhaps about as fun as the subject gets!

When loaning an instrument, it is important to consider whether, if you had no insurance, you would feel satisfied that the borrower has adequate measures to protect the item. For instruments valued over £1 million we would expect to see a number of precautions in place.

We advise making the following checks before loaning your instrument:

Physical protections

There should be locks on all external doors, and on accessible windows, especially on the ground floor and, if the instrument is to be kept in an apartment, consider whether or not the entrance to the building is controlled by a porter, or electronic 'buzzer', key, card or code-pad.

Ask if there is an alarm at the premises – and whether or not it is activated every time the building is empty – and if there is a safe, gun cabinet or lockable cupboard in which the instrument can be stored.



SAFETY FIRST: Consider the implications when loaning an instrument

Do consider all occupants of the building. Does the musician live alone, with family or with housemates? And if your instrument is likely to be left unattended, with limited security, for more than four days, consider asking for it to be returned to you, or stored somewhere more secure.

Travel patterns

Does the musician borrowing your instrument travel often for work? If so, how do they travel, and does the instrument always go with them? If they leave it at their place of work, they should ensure it is kept safe and secure. Do also check that the borrower has no plans to lend the instrument to anyone else without first consulting you.

If the instrument is to be taken on a plane, ask if the borrower has bought an extra seat and/or contacted the airline in

advance to check its musical instrument policy. They should also check with customs controls in the countries they plan to visit that their instruments and bows contain no items restricted by CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species). They will need to travel with an itinerary that details their purpose, to prove they have no intention of selling the item.

Check that they plan to stay in reputable hotels and, if the instrument is left unattended in a hotel room, to take all reasonable measures to hide it, leave the TV on and put the 'do not disturb sign' on the room door. Also ask them to consider booking any taxi journeys, to limit the need to wait on the street.

For details please contact Fay Watts at Fay.Watts@larkmusic.com

LARK *music*

Perfectly tuned insurance

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. Lark Music is focused on protecting your possessions and supporting the musical arts.

www.larkmusic.com

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