

LARKmusic

SUMMER 2015

INVESTING

IN THE

FUTURE

Featuring Charlie Siem



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“

Greetings from Sweden! Our new *Larkmusic* magazine was just going to press as we attended the ELIA conference, in Stockholm, so we sent our musical notes just in time to hit the deadline.

In fact, there's quite a nod to Scandinavia in this summer edition with violinist Charlie Siem featuring in our cover story and Danish violin maker Jens Stenz sending his wise words from Copenhagen.

We also introduce our Lark scholars, talented young people who we support through the company's ethos of believing in the future – which is the theme of this publication. Lark wants these exceptionally dedicated musicians to have the opportunity to play fine instruments and reach the highest standards. We thoroughly enjoy being part of their journey.

In turn, we congratulate the doyen of British cellists Julian Lloyd Webber on his new appointment as principal of Birmingham Conservatoire.

Our work with the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music has some unique music-meets-art connections so there are features on artist Hugo Dalton and the late 20th century artist John Craxton.

Finally, we are especially excited to announce, hot-off-the-press, that the London Sinfonietta will be commissioning a new, bespoke piece of music for Lark Insurance. How exciting is that?

Best wishes,

Gemma Stevens
Divisional Director Private Client Division

*Front cover: Charlie Siem
Photo Credit: Gilles-Marie
Zimmermann*

*Inside: Gemma Stevens
Photo Credit: Will Tisdall*





Charlie Siem
Photo credit: Uwe Arens

Raise^{the} Roof! (and they did)

Charlie Siem, the model and face of Hugo Boss, was among supporters at a Royal College of Music gala to raise money for children's musical education.

Charlie, 29, a former RCM student, performed virtuoso violin pieces at the Raise the Roof! event to help highlight the importance of Sparks, an educational outreach programme which ensures children from all backgrounds have equal access to an outstanding musical education.

It's a musician's duty to give back to the young players

The world-class contemporary classical violinist, who started to play the instrument aged three, said: "It's a musician's duty to give back and encourage young players - it's as important as sharing the music itself.

"After all, music is about connecting with people and allowing them to be themselves if only for a moment."

The event raised £50,000 and more than 90 families attended the interactive music gala. It included novice to elite masterclasses and children's workshops varying from electric composition in the studio to a drum circle with African beats and an introduction to music for young children in the museum of music.

Further highlights included soprano Natasha Day performing the Jewel Song from Faust and a violin masterclass led by Prof Itzhak Rashkovsky which was sponsored by Lark Insurance.

A grand finale performance in the Britten Theatre was led by percussionist and artistic director Ruairi Glasheen who graduated from the RCM in 2013 with the President's Award.

The Raise the Roof! invitation and programme featured designs by Hugo Dalton, whose distinctive artwork features on the walls of the RCM Museum of Music (see pages 6-7).

David Foster, Lark Insurance private clients managing director, said he was delighted to support this inaugural event alongside such talented RCM alumni.

He said: "This was a very special occasion to raise funds needed to ensure access for all children to gain an excellent musical education at the RCM.

"Parents, children, patrons and alumni all showed their enthusiasm for music and Charlie Siem, who is also an ambassador for The Prince's Trust, really inspired everyone."



Raise the Roof! programme cover

Celebrated British artist Hugo Dalton generously designed the RCM's Raise the Roof! programme, just one of several collaborations with the College which is blossoming into an exciting relationship.

Music-loving Hugo is best known for his contemporary wall painting and unique light drawing but now he is pushing the barriers with live music drawing.

Hugo, 37, said: "I want to open up classical music to allow another layer of interest and interpretation for a new audience through live art. I want them to be more involved."

In the experimental concert Debussy Explosion, Hugo joined RCM's student pianist Imma Setiadi, and remixed her rendition of Debussy Preludes with live drawings on a large screen.

While Imma played the dramatic score, Hugo stood opposite creating an immediate visual which was projected on to the screen as he responded to the music.

Hugo said: "The key point was to present classical recitals in a new light, to experiment and not make it quite such a stuffy affair."

"The human mark, when displayed with classical music, speaks the same language."

RCM artistic director Stephen Johns was delighted by the collaboration and he feels that Hugo's work mirrors the RCM's own art form.

He said: "The performance of music exists in real time and Hugo has responded to this impetus to create new and exciting works - this interaction of sound, structure and image creates a feast for the senses."

"Hugo carries this free-drawing response to evolve shapes and patterns that he also uses for permanent images, visible notably in the fresh and uplifting decoration of the RCM's Museum of Music."

Hugo's relationship with the RCM began when director Colin Lawson admired his swirling acrylic and gold-leaf work on the walls of the Royal Albert Hall.

This site-specific piece was inspired by a coiled French hunting horn, echoing the building's iconic circular shape.

Colin felt Hugo's unique work, with a musical twist, would sit well at the RCM and he introduced him to the RCM Museum of Music's curator Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, who recently joined the college from the Galleria dell'Accademia and University of Florence.

Gabriele leapt at the chance to work with Hugo. He said: "We talked to Hugo about a temporary

project in the museum. It is a wonderfully vibrant and active place because as well as hosting collections, there are a huge number of concerts and events.

"But it was, to be honest, an uninspiring setting, with dull blue walls."

"We felt Hugo's artwork could give visitors to the museum a strong visual feeling that the architecture and museum exhibits have been animated though the wall painting."

"The walls were painted white during the Easter holidays and Hugo transformed the north and west walls with a design inspired by listening to performances by college students, including Dario Castello's Sonata Secunda for recorder and harpsichord."

His work looks deceptively simple

Hugo said: "I wanted to convey the momentary and intangible experience of walking through the RCM. The artwork at the museum represents the quest for a perfect note; some marks on the wall are refined and complete while others are in the process of emerging "e artwork 'reflects what the museum wants to be'.

The museum will be closed for three years due to the RCM's exciting Courtyard project, so to keep it alive we want more collaborations and will be exploring pop-up art sessions in public spaces, perhaps even train stations. We want to broaden our reach.

"When the museum re-opens, the historic instruments will have been refurbished. Many have never been restored, so we want people to come in to see them and keep a connection."

So will Hugo's work be incorporated into the RCM's new buildings? Watch this space.

The RCM Museum of Music is open from Tuesday to Friday 11.30am to 4.30pm. Every Friday a concert or recital is held in the museum, details can be found at: www.rcm.ac.uk

A man in a light-colored button-down shirt and dark trousers is walking down a dark wooden staircase. To his left, the wall is covered in large, white, line-art cutouts of faces and hands, some of which are overlapping. To his right, a large window looks out onto a brick building. The overall tone is artistic and modern.

The art *of* music

*Hugo Dalton, whose
contemporary artwork can
now be seen at the
Royal College of Music
Photo credit: Tom Mannion*

A young man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, stands in a room with marble walls and a dark wooden door. He is holding a violin and a bow, looking directly at the camera. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows. The text "Searching for a soul" is overlaid in white serif font, framed by horizontal lines.

Searching for a soul

*Lark Music Scholar Joseph Devalle
Photo Credit: Will Tisdall*

“It’s been a massive relief to have support from Lark, they have taken a genuine interest in my development and it has allowed me to keep working on the music”

When potential stars of the music world leave education without access to musical instruments most have to beg and borrow before a performance. More time can be spent worrying about how to secure an instrument than actually playing.

Joseph Devalle, our first Lark Music Scholar, will complete his Master’s in Performance at the Royal College of Music School (RCM) this summer and he, too, has been facing the same fate.

The Lark team have not only witnessed Joseph develop into a fine musician over the past couple of years but have enjoyed getting to know him on a personal level.

He has worked so hard and made such incredible progress that it seemed unthinkable to leave him with such a dilemma so I am delighted to announce that The Stradivari Trust has agreed to assist him source a violin of outstanding quality so he can continue to perform to the best of his ability.

The trust supports and promotes excellence in the field of classical music and its chairman Nigel Brown, has arranged for an expert to accompany Joseph on visits to a number of violin dealers to look for a good 18th century Italian violin.

So where will the money come from?

The cost could be around £250,000 and once a violin has been chosen, Nigel will contact his investor network and an individual trust can be set up.

Joseph is now in the process of producing a biography which will be sent to investors and, for Lark’s part, we will arrange showcase concerts to promote his talent. The first was on April 16, earlier this year at the RCM.

Fortunately, Nigel had already met and heard Joseph play. He totally agreed that we were ‘square-on to a major problem’ if we did not help him find an instrument to take him to the next level.

Joseph has been talking through everything with his parents and he said: “When Nigel agreed to help me look for a violin it was the sort of push I needed. “He said I should keep an open mind on what violin I try to secure but the sooner I can find one and start building a relationship with that instrument the better, so I can make that connection.

“It’s been a massive relief to have support from Lark, they have taken a genuine interest in my development and it has allowed me to keep working on the music - but this continued commitment and persistence to get me this back up has been amazing.

“Now all I need is a violin with a soul.”

As *Larkmusic* went to press, Joseph had found a 19th Century Lupot violin and was in further talks with Nigel Brown.

It began with Kennedy

Retired financier Nigel Brown has been responsible for putting together syndicates of like-minded individuals to buy fine stringed instruments for the exclusive use by exceptional musicians, such as Joseph, on the understanding that they would redeem the ownership of the instrument over the course of a 10 to 20-year trust.

Nigel, who has received an OBE for his services to business, said: “Joe Devalle is a pretty talented violinist and certainly needs something to take him to the next level.

Nigel’s first musician-violin match was in 1984 after he had attended a Brahms concerto. Nigel Kennedy was playing a Guadagnini, made by Giovanni Batista.

Nigel said he asked Kennedy why nobody had bought him a Stradivarius.

“Nobody’s offered,” Kennedy told him.

Nigel told Kennedy he would find something and two years and a half years later he had secured La Cathedrale Stradivarius 1707.



The start of a beautiful relationship

*Lark Music Scholar
Alexandra Lomeiko*

“ I feel unbelievably lucky to be sponsored by a company that is doing such great things for musicians... ”

Music is in the lifeblood of our new Royal College of Music (RCM) Scholar, Alexandra Lomeiko.

Alexandra, 23, was born in Novosibirsk, Russia, but her musical family was always travelling. When she was five, they eventually settled in New Zealand and her mother began to teach Alexandra how to play the violin.

At 12, she started to play a full-size instrument, a Frederic Chaudiere violin, made in 1999. Alexandra says she became very attached to it.

She said: “I was very shy and it was due to this that I became so close to my violin. It never let me down and it was always there for me.”

Alexandra moved to London to study at the Purcell School of Music when she was 15 and went on to take her BMus degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2010 before starting her Masters in Performance at the RCM in 2014.

She said: “Earlier this year the RCM loaned me a violin made by Carlo Tononi of Cremona, it was made in 1687. Although I’ve only had it for a few months, I’ve begun to fall deeply in love with it.

“The aged wood and the beautiful craftsmanship has created a violin which is phenomenally responsive and produces the most irresistible sound.

“It is a special relationship that a violinist has with a violin, because there is only so much that a violinist can control. The real magic happens through the body of the finely crafted instrument, a magic to which we violinists owe our lives!

“The music and the emotions musicians put into their instrument is parallel to the same emotions we put into our relationships with people, so if my violin was lost I would find that hard to deal with.”

Alexandra says being at the RCM is ‘now really beginning to feel like home’. She said: “It has a family-like atmosphere and the historic building is great at motivating practice and inspiring ideas.

“The MPerf programme has a great balance and variety of modules to prepare me for my professional career and the performance

opportunities the RCM provides are helping me get the experience I need before emerging into the ‘real’ world.”

Alexandra performs chamber music and solo recitals and also works with many London orchestras through student placement schemes.

Silk Street Sinfonia.

In 2013, she and her friend, Luba Tunncliffe, formed an unconducted chamber orchestra, the Silk Street Sinfonia, which Alexandra leads from the violin.

Alexandra said: “I want to push Silk Street Sinfonia to a more professional level, performing in more prestigious venues with amazing soloists such as violinists Leonidas Kavakos, Maxim Vengerov and Itzhak Perlman.

“My dream is to play alongside the pianist Emmanuel Ax and violinists Janine Jansen and Laurence Power.”

Alexandra says she has learned how much more enjoyable a concert becomes when the performer talks to the audience during the concert.

She said: “I loved the performance for Lark Insurance at the RCM because it was a light-hearted audience who were appreciative and enthusiastic.

As a Lark scholar I feel unbelievably lucky to be sponsored by a company that is doing such great things for musicians and is so supportive and interested in my studies.”

Alexandra added: “The past three years have been difficult for my family. Since the earthquake in Christchurch, in February 2011, my parents have only been able to do limited work and, were it not for Lark’s generosity, I probably would not have been able to continue my studies here.”

For further information about supporting a scholarship at the RCM please contact Fiona Rose at fiona.rose@rcm.ac.uk

“It's a special feeling sitting in an orchestra during a symphonic climax, the closest analogy is scoring the winning try in a World Cup rugby game”

Guitar or piano, cello or rugby? Anil Umer had so many interests when he was growing up that it was always a juggling act to fit them all in - but the cello eventually won!

Anil's music-loving mother encouraged him to learn an instrument from the age of five and he took up the piano and guitar.

Anil only started playing the cello by “accident”. He said: “At nine, I began having lessons to fill a gap in the cello section of my school orchestra, but it soon became my preferred instrument.”

At 12, Anil was offered a full music scholarship to study at the Perse School in Cambridge but he says there were still choices to be made.

“I spent most of my teenage years torn between the cello and rugby. I also continued to play the piano.”

In fact, he achieved grade eight in piano with distinction in 2008 as well as securing 10 GCSE A* grades and A grades for A-levels in maths, biology and chemistry.

Anil said: “I knew I wanted to go on to study at music college and pursue a career as a cellist. My school focused on academic studies but I eventually chose to read Music at Exeter College, Oxford.”

Anil became Principal Cellist of the Oxford String Ensemble and Co-Principal Cellist of the Oxford University Orchestra. He was also a member of the Solis Ensemble and a founding member and Principal Cellist in the New Cambridge Symphony Orchestra. He graduated in June 2013.

He said: “Now, having come from a primarily academic degree with minimal emphasis on performance, the quality and quantity of coaching on offer at the Royal Academy of Music has been truly awe-inspiring.

“Lark Insurance has enabled me to complete my second year and I am extremely grateful for the support. I want to say really big thank you!”

“This year has been particularly important as I am learning with a new teacher, Mats Lidstrom, and preparing for orchestral auditions.

“It has also helped to play a fine instrument - I play an English cello made by Thomas Kennedy

(c.1825) which I am very lucky to have been loaned by the Benslow Music Trust.”

Anil has performed as a soloist and chamber musician across the UK, at venues including Ely Cathedral, the Jacqueline Du Pre Music Building and Magdalen College Auditorium in Oxford, and West Road Concert Hall in Cambridge. He said: “My studies are likely to end this July and I would love a career playing with a major symphony orchestra. It's a special feeling to be sitting in an orchestra during a huge symphonic climax, the closest analogy is scoring the winning try in a World Cup rugby game!

“In all seriousness, I find orchestral playing immensely enjoyable. I also love chamber music and I would love to explore various styles, instrumentations and genres of music in a chamber setting.”

Anil has an eclectic taste in music, listening to ‘a mix of things’ including Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, Swedish House Mafia, Ed Sheeran and John McLaughlin.

He is also keen to share his love of music and said: “I am passionate about outreach work and my ideal audience would be comprised of people who wouldn't normally hear classical music – for instance, people in hospital wards, children from underprivileged backgrounds or the elderly and immobile.

Anil said: “Once I finish studying I hope to begin applying for orchestral work as well as putting in applications for further study abroad, perhaps Germany. I am also studying to become a strength and conditioning coach as I am interested in providing corrective exercise solutions for musicians.”

Joana Witkowski of the Royal Academy of Music said: “We are so grateful to Lark Insurance for supporting Anil. At the Academy, we believe musical talent should not be impeded by financial constraint. Our wonderful community of scholarship supporters helps us to open up the gold-standard in musical training to the widest range of musicians, regardless of background and circumstances.

Details about how to provide a lifeline for an outstanding young musician can be found here: <http://www.ram.ac.uk/support>

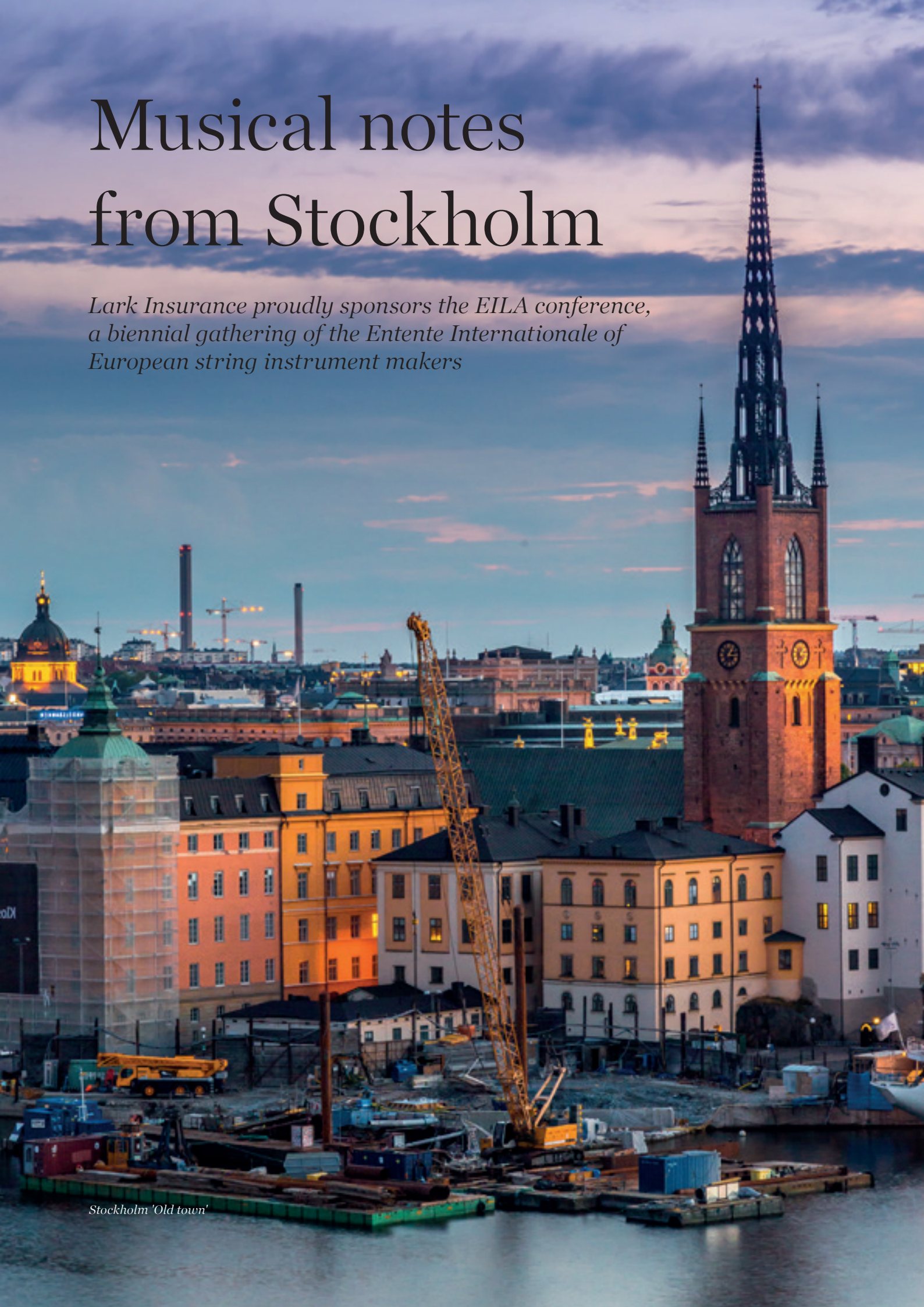
A close-up portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair and a slight stubble, looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. He is wearing a dark blue collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

The cellist who kicked rugby into touch

*Lark Music Scholar Anil Umer
Photo Credit: Will Tisdall*

Musical notes from Stockholm

*Lark Insurance proudly sponsors the EILA conference,
a biennial gathering of the Entente Internationale of
European string instrument makers*



Stockholm 'Old town'

Divisional Director Gemma Stevens writes from the 2015 congress in Sweden

The EILA conference is a biennial meeting where European string instrument makers and experts gather to exchange knowledge and ideas.

Lark Insurance has sponsored the last two conferences and at this year's event in Stockholm Claire Sanders, Emma Johnson and I were warmly welcomed during a reception evening in the House of Nobility, in the old town.

We enjoyed a talk on the house, which was built in the mid-17th century, along with some Swedish folk music.

EILA president Peter Beare said: "Lark shares the same philosophy as EILA in terms of looking after clients and providing the best possible service.

"Lark is discreet, understands that in this small world of violins that doing your best speaks louder than shouting about it, and they are very nice people to work with."

Peter added: "The EILA aims to raise the level of skill and expertise of members – as well as encouraging friendship and the pursuit of excellence we hope they will be able to offer the highest level of care to instruments and their owners.

"Being a member is not about prestige but becoming a member requires attaining a high professional level in many aspects of the craft and trade."

EILA has a membership of 170 violin and bow makers. The conference is important to Lark as it allows us to keep abreast with what is going on in the violin world and be aware of any issues affecting the violin community.

Peter welcomed everyone during a reception evening in the House of Nobility, in the old town. We enjoyed a talk on the house, which was built in the mid-17th century, and some Swedish folk music before group photos were taken.

Lectures are the core of the congress but there is also plenty of time for socialising. In the spirit of EILA's original goal of encouraging friendship, we have also enjoyed a gala dinner and sightseeing in the city.

At the Grand Hotel, our stand has been kept busy with people wanting information about our dealer product. In fact, each day the numbers of visitors wanting to discuss insurance has risen and it has been a pleasure to have the time to sit with clients to discuss their requirements and in many cases complete proposal forms.

We have felt a 'real want to work with us' from the prospective clients and it has made our journey very worthwhile.

It has been hungry work so we've also indulged in traditional lunches in the sunshine, including veal burgers, salmon, creamed mash, lingonberries and almond cakes. That hasn't stopped us eating out in the evenings, too, and we had an enjoyable dinner with EILA members Derek Wilson and Tim Baker.

The exhibitions in the Grand Hotel have proved really popular. This has been great news for Lark as our table and display is positioned right next to the exhibition. It has not been until the end of the day that we have had free time to study the violins on display.

Our hosts have built in plenty of time to explore Stockholm. No trip is complete without a trip to the Vasa Museum. King Gustav Adolf's mighty ship foundered on her maiden voyage in 1628 but was not salvaged for 333 years. Since being lifted from the bottom of Stockholm Strom she has been beautifully preserved and her 700 carved sculptures make her a unique treasure.

We have also joined the Entente on a boat trip to Drottningholms Slottsteater, built in 1766 at the request of Queen Lovisa Ulrika. Here, the annual summer opera festival takes place and attracts audiences from all over the world.

The Entente's gala dinner at the Operakallaren was something very special. This opera house was built in 1787 by King Gustav III and it sits on the water's edge offering a beautiful view over the city.

On a sunny evening, we all dressed for the occasion and were greeted with a champagne reception. I found it a little nerve-racking to make a thank you speech after the dinner but it was made easier with support from Peter Beare and the hosts Paul Barter and Sebastian Skarp who again thanked Lark for its sponsorship.

The EILA president stands for two years and the new incumbent Jan Strick was also welcomed to the stage to announce the next meetings in Beijing 2017, Quebec in 2019 and Madrid 2021.

We hope to see you there!

Thirty years ago, having learned my trade at the Welsh School of Violin Making and Repair, I worked for one of the world's oldest violin making establishments, Emil Hjorth & Sons, in Copenhagen.

A year later, in 1986, I opened my own workshop in Aarhus (Denmark's second largest city) and specialised in the repair, buying and selling instruments. I also made some new instruments.



Jens Stenz at in his workshop

Soon after opening my workshop, I needed to insure a fine violin made by J. B.Vuillaume, Paris, in 1862. Despite having a certificate from respected violin dealer Charles Beare and a well-documented provenance, no Danish insurance company would insure the instrument. In their eyes I was probably too young and unknown in the trade.

I called Mr Beare and outlined my problem. Without hesitation he suggested I should call Les Roberts, of British Reserve.

Les said: "Yes – we can work something out!"

British Reserve later ceased insuring outside the UK and again trouble had to break all rules. Les moved to Lark Insurance and built up its instrument department and I began a fruitful working relationship with Lark.

Some 20 years on, Claire Sanders is at the steering wheel with the same positive spirit.

All good conversation begins with a positive attitude and being open. At Lark this seems to be one of its main business policies. When you call the Lark office, the words are usually "How can we help?" or "I am sure we can do something about this".

This means a lot to clients, be it a private

individual, musical instrument maker or institution such as a symphony orchestra or foundation.

Shortly after introducing private customers to Lark Insurance, I had requests from symphony orchestras asking whether I could assist them in getting quotations from Lark.

A symphony orchestra comprises 70 to 100 musicians and a range of instruments from timpani drums to piccolo flutes and the whole section of strings, so making insurance valuations has become a significant part of my work.

When I appraise an instrument or bow there are basic things to look for. First, the instrument must be in good condition, well-preserved or at least well-restored. Any faults, non-original parts or damage will lower the value of an instrument. I always look for structural strength - the instrument should work and perform now with up to 50 years ahead.

Sometimes I have to kindly suggest the owner/user should take more care of their instrument's "health" and in some instances I have to preach harsh words.

After all, Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and audiences deserve the best-sounding instruments. The maker is also an important issue. Most musicians select an instrument mainly because of its sound quality.

Sound is subjective and if one was supposed to value an instrument from its sound properties alone I fear World War Three could break out between musician and the appraiser.

Sound-wise an instrument should fit an individual musician; luckily they are all different and this makes up the fantastic diversity of an orchestra.

On some occasions instruments are bought by foundations or investors who rely upon expertise and a secure insurance policy. Once again a serious appraisal is important. A Lark insurance policy backed by a certificate from a respected expert in the trade, plus a condition report is advisable in this situation.

Keeping an insurance policy up-to-date is an important issue as most instruments and bows of the violin family will increase in value.

For valuations or musical instrument cover contact Emma Johnson on 0208 557 2446 or email emma.johnson@larkinsurance.co.uk

Jens Stenz can be contacted by email at jens@stenz-violins.dk

A detailed photograph of a violin maker's workshop. The room is filled with violins hanging on green racks along the walls. A large, arched window in the center provides natural light and a view of trees outside. In the foreground, a large wooden workbench with a black metal frame is visible, equipped with various tools and a violin. The background shows more workbenches, drawers, and shelves filled with tools and materials. A black office chair is positioned near the window.

Lark is the string to my bow.

By Jens Stenz

Jens Stenz's workshop

A portrait of Andrew Burke, CEO of the London Sinfonietta, standing outdoors with a body of water and buildings in the background. He is wearing a dark blue sweater over a white collared shirt.

The Early Birds

*Andrew Burke, CEO of
the London Sinfonietta*

Photo Credit: Will Tisdall

London Sinfonietta is taking Lark Insurance on a musical journey as it tunes up for a spectacular 50th anniversary celebration.

A 21st century version of Vaughan Williams' Lark Ascending has been commissioned to mark Lark Insurance's support for the contemporary chamber orchestra's World Premiere Wednesdays - bi-monthly breakfast meetings where a new piece of classical music is played to an early bird audience.

Andrew Burke, London Sinfonietta's CEO, suggested an original work should be dedicated to Lark. He said: "The score was originally written for violin and orchestra but the idea that we might have a piece written for violin, with a contemporary resonance and played for people who are up with the Lark, just makes you smile!

"It will be loosely based on the inspiration of Lark Ascending, certainly not a carbon copy, and I can't think of a better way to thank Lark for its support.

"Lark is insuring the future of music, and its team led by David Foster is interested in the journey and wants a unique experience; reaching lots of people and influencing those lives. It's the kind of thing money can't buy.

"This meaningful support helps London Sinfonietta sustain its values; we are all about new music, what is being written today. This year we have more than 20 composers writing solo, ensemble and cross-art-form commissions.

"We connect very well with Lark and working together creates a greater circle of people who believe in us.

"Guests arrive early for coffee and croissants at the breakfast-time World Premiere Wednesdays at Kings Place, our headquarters in King's Cross, and have the privilege to listen to a new piece of classical music.

"With new music people are sometimes a bit tentative so to offer them a short piece is pretty painless and a fairly low-commitment contract - everyone can start their day in a rather special way but be gone by around 9.30am."

Andrew added: "London Sinfonietta was formed on Wednesday, January 24, 1968. It seems some way off to our half century but the bi-monthly World Premiere Wednesdays are part of our countdown and we are already planning celebration events because we will be looking as much to our future as we will the past.

"An ex-chairman of the orchestra once said 'we don't live in a museum' and I feel that sums up

what life is about; we do listen to music that is 200 years old but we have permission to think about what's new and now.

"Likewise, Lark's insurance business is about preserving musical instruments but also sustaining something for the future. Certainly Lark is helping to make sure this organisation's future is insured.

"Lark does remarkable work to enable people to play fine instruments, making sure they are looked after and stay useable, as well as supporting artists to enable them to shine."

David Foster, Managing Director Lark private clients, said: "We are really excited about the new commission, especially as we at Lark will also be marking a milestone in 2018 - it will be our 70th anniversary as a broker.

"Celebrating this landmark year, with a new piece of music that has been composed for us, will be exciting for the business. Our link with the London Sinfonietta is already proving to be very positive."

London Sinfonietta's mission is to place the best contemporary classical music at the heart of today's culture, engaging and challenging the public through inspiring performances of the highest standard and taking risks to develop new work and talent. Founded in 1968, the ensemble's commitment to making new music has seen it commission over 300 works and premiere many hundreds more.



Photo Credit: Kevin Leighton

Resident at Southbank Centre with a busy touring schedule worldwide, its core is 18 Principal Players, representing some of the best solo and ensemble musicians in the world. The group also works with talented emerging players to ensure the unique expertise of its Principals is passed on.

Having held a world-leading position in education and participation work for many years, the London Sinfonietta continues this with a belief that arts participation is transformational to individuals and communities, and new music is relevant to people's lives.

National treasure Sir David Attenborough is not just a wildlife enthusiast - he is an avid art collector and was featured in a talk at the Pilgrims Way Artists' Annual Summer Exhibition preview, which was supported by Lark.

Dr Ian Collins, curator of the award-winning Masterpieces exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich, was guest speaker at the event in Kent, and told how Sir David came across the British artist John Craxton (1922-2009) when he was a publisher in the late 1940s.

Craxton's work was being used to illustrate Patrick Leigh Fermor's travel books and his drawings of intense encounters with the natural world captivated Sir David – and they have done ever since. The two men became great friends.

John Craxton came from a highly musical family. His father Harold Craxton OBE was Professor of Piano at the Royal Academy of Music and his mother, Essie Faulkner, a fine violinist. Youngest daughter Janet was their only child of six to become a professional musician. She was a brilliant oboist and played for the London Sinfonietta.

Dr Collins' talk *The Poetic Eye: A Journey from Kent to Crete* included a recording of Sir David talking about his discovery of Craxton's early work through to a newly found work which he felt had an amazing 'ping and twang'.



Sir David Attenborough and Dr Ian Collins share their mutual admiration for John Craxton's work

Dr Collins gave an overview of Craxton's early life where friends of his Bohemian parents 'would come for lunch and stay for two years'. Prof Harold Craxton lectured, taught and entertained at the house and accompanied some of the finest singers and musicians of the day. As a result, the Craxton household became a focal point for music and the artistic milieu in London including Larry Adler, Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Sir John Betjeman, Benjamin Britten, Lord Kenneth Clarke, Sir Peter

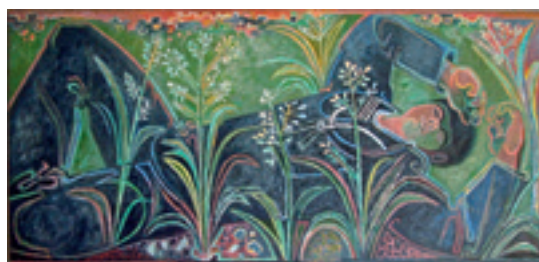
Maxwell Davis, Howard Keel, Cleo Laine, Sir Yehudi Menuhin and Sir Henry Moore.

The Craxton Memorial Trust, created in memory of Harold and Essie, continues to support young musicians and former Lark scholar Joseph Devalle benefited from their legacy while he studied at the Royal College of Music.

Dr Collins told the audience that John Craxton was much-loved but 'the odd one out' in this musical family and moved from school to school, including Betteshanger, near Deal, in Kent, where he found his love of painting,

In 1947, aged 24, the artist eventually found himself in Crete, away from the London art crowd, although Lucian Freud his former flatmate made an early visit.

Craxton's work changed from reflections of war to joyful and exuberant Cretan landscapes, featuring goats, cats and dancing sailors. It was near-Arcadia and his musical background also began to echo through his work.



Reclining figure with asphodels by John Craxton
Photo Credit: John Craxton Estate

In 1950 Craxton made a return to London to create the sets and costumes for choreographer Sir Frederick Ashton's ballet *Daphnis and Chloe*, starring Margot Fonteyn. A 'blissful' cruise around the Greek islands followed and within the party guided by Patrick Leigh Fermor were Ashton and Fonteyn.

Craxton and Fonteyn became lovers but the affair was the last act of a warm friendship; their lives lay elsewhere, not least due to a mutual lack of money, said Dr Collins. In 1955, Fonteyn danced *Daphnis and Chloe* the night before marrying Panamanian Roberto Arias, who Craxton loathed.

John Craxton on Cranborne Chase and Crete runs at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester until September 19, 2015 and the Salisbury Museum from January to May 2016.



Ping & Twang

Artist John Craxton did not follow in the footsteps of his parents, 20th century musicians Harold Craxton and Essie Faulkner, but a love of music shone through his work

Lovers: John Craxton and Margot Fonteyn during sizzling affair in Crete

*Photo Credit:
John Craxton Estate*

Julian Lloyd Webber joins Conservatoire

Cellist Julian Lloyd Webber has been appointed as Principal at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

He will take up the position on July 1, at a particularly exciting time as the conservatoire builds a £46 million home in Birmingham's city centre.

Lloyd Webber said: "The state-of-the-art facilities being built within Birmingham City University's campus will be second-to-none and superior to many, both throughout the UK and beyond.

He told LARKmusic: "I can't wait to get my feet under the table.

"I am honoured and thrilled to be chosen as the new principal of the conservatoire and I am especially excited about the fantastic opportunities that will be on offer to our students."



Julian Lloyd Webber

Lloyd Webber is regarded as one of the finest musicians of his generation and was the only classical musician chosen to perform at the London Olympics 2012 closing ceremony. Last year he received the Incorporated Society of Musician's annual Distinguished Musician Award.

Birmingham Conservatoire's vice-chancellor Cliff Allan said: "Julian's appointment is great news for the conservatoire, Birmingham City

University and for the whole city – confirming its status in classical music education and performance.

"Julian has had an extraordinary career and has shown a lifetime passion for musical education, making him the perfect appointment."

Music as Medicine

Julian Lloyd Webber is an ambassador for Live Music Now, a charity created by the late Sir Yehudi Menuhin and Ian Stoutzker.

Lloyd Webber said: "Live Music Now is doing the most incredible work which should be much better known. Its 2,500 participatory concerts every year benefit both listeners and young musicians.

"Yehudi said 'Music, amongst all the great arts, is the language which penetrates most deeply into the human spirit, reaching people through every barrier, disability, language and circumstance'.

"It was his dream to bring music back into the lives of those people especially prone to stress and suffering so that it might comfort, heal and bring delight."

Live Music Now (LMN) supports professional musicians to benefit those who are otherwise excluded from the joy of experiencing live music - many are disadvantaged and often face difficulties in communicating.

Lloyd Webber recently joined LMN's Ian Stoutzker and Evan Dawson at the House of Lords to discuss the potential for live music to play a greater role in society and feature more regularly in the NHS.

'Music as Medicine' was presented to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing to highlight how musicians have seen their work 'dramatically change the dynamics of places, people's relationships and their engagement with the world around them.

LNM says there is increasing evidence that music can help people living with dementia and a range of other conditions. Projects such as Gloucester's Art Lift has demonstrated that participants in regular arts activities made fewer visits to their GPs and A&E departments.

The charity is working on several research projects, including a series of music 'doses' for patients recovering from brain surgery whose recovery may be speeded up as a result.

Details at www.livemusicnow.org.uk



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