ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

AUTUMN PIANO FESTIVAL: JANÁČEK'S PIANO MUSIC

TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER
DUKE'S HALL

11.15AM	IN THE MISTS
1PM	UPRISING AND FOLKTALES
2.30PM	WAR MUSIC
3.45PM	PARALIPOMENA
5PM	FOREVER YOUNG



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A CENTENARY CELEBRATION: JANÁČEK'S PIANO MUSIC

In May 1926, Henry Wood invited the seventy-two-year-old Leoš Janáćek to visit the Royal Academy of Music, where he sat in Duke's Hall and watched an orchestral rehearsal chatting to his host, the musicologist Rosa Newmarch, and the students.

A hundred years later we're celebrating Janáček's passionate, utterly original output for pianists, in five very distinct concerts spread throughout the day. There's the complete solo piano music – from the celebrated sonata *1.X.1905 'From the Street'* and the complete series of *On an Overgrown Path*, to his fragmentary, deeply personal *Intimate Sketches*. The day-long festival presents duo chamber pieces, music for organ and club-swinging, Moravian folk dances, and the larger ensemble works *Capriccio* and *Concertino* for piano, wind and brass – the second of which received its Wigmore premiere two days after Janáček's Academy visit, on 6th May 1926.

'I hear music constantly in the empty silence, while the intellect is still and all emotional strings are relaxed.' Janáček

At the start of the day Joanna MacGregor briefly introduces the different styles in today's five concerts - from Janáček's well-known masterpieces to his later personal works and fragments - and tells the story of Janáček's visit.

11.15AM IN THE MISTS

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Zdenka Variations
Moravian Dances
Intimate Sketches
In the Mists

PROGRAMME NOTES

Zdenka Variations *10'*
Theme – Andante – Allegro – Con moto – Con moto – Meno mosso – Adagio – Adagio

Mayuko Narutani piano

This opening concert opens with Janáček's earliest known work for piano, and ends with his last cycle, *In the Mists*.

Born into a family of nine children, Janáček's father Jiří was a Kapellmeister and music teacher, serving several impoverished communities in northern Moravia. At eleven, Leoš left his family home in the small Czech village of Hukvaldy to become a chorister at the Augustinian monastery in Brno: he was to dedicate the third movement of his *Sinfonietta* to the adjoining Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady, sixty years later. He moved to Prague in 1874 to study at the Bohemian capital's celebrated Organ School; composition studies in Leipzig and Vienna encouraged his blossoming musicianship, enabling Janáček to pick up some chorus master jobs when he returned to Brno in 1879.

This charming, traditional set of variations in B flat major was composed in 1880 and dedicated to the sixteen-year-old Zdenka Schulzová, while he was struggling to establish himself. They

married the following year, just as Leoš founded the Brno Organ School. It later became the Brno Conservatory.

Moravian Dances *8'*

Ej, Denaj! *Hey there!*
Starodávný *Antique, in the past*
Pilky *Little handsaw*
Kalamajka *Circular dance: the chimney sweep got married*
Kolo *The Wheel*
Čeladenský *Catalan*

Chuyu Wang piano

Janáček was as much a musicologist as a composer. Like Bartók and Kodály, he believed in the powerful values of folk music: he collected and transcribed over 3,000 folk songs and dances on a road trip across Moravia, with his friend František Bartoš. His arrangements tended to keep the modal twists and raw flavour of instruments like the cimbalom, fiddle and harmonium.

These dances come from the five-volume *Národní Tance na Moravé* (1891), a collectively published set by Janáček, Xavier Běhalgova and Lucie Bakešová. Each dance is preceded by graphics and triangles of dance steps, with detailed instructions; many of them come in different musical versions, for cimbalom, organ or piano. They're jazzy, and punchily piquant.

Intimate Sketches *12'*

Malostranský palác *Palace of Malostranský (1927)*
Bez názvu *Untitled (1920-26)*
Melodie *(1923)*
Moderato *(1911)*
Jen slepý osud? *Merely bind fate?(1927)*
Aby už se nemohlo jíti nikdy zpět *So that you could never return (1928)*
Zlatý kroužek *The golden ring (1928)*
Čekám Tě! *I am waiting for you! (1928)*
Rondo *(1877)*
Na památku *A Recollection (1887)*
Své Olze *To my Olga (1896)*

Ukolébavka *Lullaby (1920)*
Narodil se Kristus Pán *Christ the Lord is Born (1909)*

Emanuil Ivanov piano

Intimate Sketches is a collection of piano miniatures first published together in 1994, sixty-six years after Janáček's death. The thirteen pieces, most only a minute (or less) long, were gathered from manuscripts and publications - notably the *People's News* (the oldest newspaper in the Czech Republic, still going) and from the *Album for Kamila Stösslová*.

Janáček was 63, and living separately from Zdenka, when he met the late love of his life in 1917. Kamila Stösslová was a happily married woman of 25, with a young son, Otto. Over the next eleven years Janáček sent Kamila over 700 letters, creating complex operatic heroines inspired by her in *Katyá Kabanová, The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Makropolous Case,* as well as his Quartet no.2, *Intimate Letters* and the song cycle *Diary of One Who Disappeared.* For him it was an all-consuming, intense - but entirely one-sided - love affair; for her, a close friendship.

Intimate Sketches include Janáček's last etchings before his death in 1928, from pneumonia. He was on an excursion to Štramberk, a small village in the

Moravian-Silesian Foothills, with Kamila and Otto.

In the Mists *15'*

Andante
Molto adagio
Andantino
Presto

Harry Bowden piano

In 1912 Janáček was at a low ebb. He was finding it impossible to get his operas performed; his marriage had broken up, and his beloved daughter Olga had died; he suffered from rheumatism. (He was 62 before his breakthrough arrived – a performance of his opera Jenůfa in Prague.) Two things buoyed him up: a premiere of Debussy's *Reflets dans l'eau* in Brno, and the positive response to *On an Overgrown Path,* published in 1911. The first version of *In the Mists* was published at the end of 1912, then revised in 1913. Another version was published in 1922, in honour of Janáček's 70th birthday.

All four movements bear faint traces to Debussy's piano style, a delicious combination of Moravian folk song and impressionism. It's also a nostalgic reflection on childhood, a looking back to a misty youth in Hukvaldy. The first movement is haunting, and occasionally troubled; the second quite free. The third is based on a strong melody, and the fourth hints at gipsy music. All four movements are threaded with tenderness and optimism.

BIOGRAPHIES

Mayuko Narutani

Mayuko Narutani is a second year Masters's student studying with Colin Stone, after graduating with a first-class degree from the Faculty of Music at the Tokyo University of the Arts. A multiple prize winner, Mayuko is particularly committed to chamber music; she won the First Prize at the 5th Japan Chamber Music Competition, and top prizes at the Salzburg Mozart International Chamber Music Competition and the 2nd Bechstein Chamber Music Competition. As a soloist, she has performed many recitals since coming to London, and recently won Fourth Prize at the Basel International Piano Competition. She has been mentored by Akiyoshi Sako, Yuya Tsuda and Takahiro Hoshino, and last year was awarded a the 'Wakai Me wo Sodateru Kai' (Association for Nurturing Young Talents) scholarship in Japan.

Chuyu Wang

Chuyu Wang is a second-year undergraduate studying under Professor Joanna MacGregor. She arrived in London from the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou; as well as performing as a pianist, from 2019-2022 Chuyu served as Principal Flute of the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra Junior Symphony and the Associate Principal Flute of the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra. She gave her first solo piano recital at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou aged ten; at eleven she performed at Carnegie Hall in New York, and at thirteen played all 27 Chopin études in Xinghai. Chuyu has given over thirty solo recitals across major cities in China including Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan,

and Zhanjiang, and has also appeared as soloist with the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra, touring Hangzhou, Suzhou, Tianjin and Fuzhou. Chuyu has appeared at the Tianjin Juilliard Piano Festival and at Juilliard Summer Music in New York. Recent highlights include performances of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No 2 in China last summer, and concerts with the City of London Sinfonia.

Emanuil Ivanov

Emanuil first attracted international attention by winning the First Prize at the 2019 Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition in Italy. Since then he has been invited to some of the world's most prestigious halls, including La Scala, Milan, Wigmore Hall and - most recently - the Weill Recital Hall in New York. Born Bulgaria, Emanuil is completed his Advanced Diploma with Christopher Elton and Joanna MacGregor, Dame Myra Hess Chair of Piano, having been awarded the prestigious Bicentenary Scholarship. His recording of Scarlatti Sonatas was recently released on Naxos, and his new recording of Rzewski's *The People United will Never be Defeated* was released on Linn Records last Christmas. Emanuil continuously displays an affinity for some of the repertoire's less frequently performed works and played Busoni's massive Piano Concerto several times in 2025, followed by complete cycles of Shostakovich's Preludes and Fugues. His performances have been featured on BBC Radio 3, Italy's Rai Radio 3 and Japan's NHK Radio. Emanuil performed Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1 with John Wilson and the Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra last November, and made his debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall. He recently toured with the RTE Orchestra playing Tchaikovsky's first piano concerto and is serving on the jury of the inaugural Cape Town International Piano Competition in 2027. As well as being a prolific composer, Emanuil is the first Sulamita Aronovsky Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music.

Harry Bowden

Harry Bowden is a young pianist from Bolton, studying as a second-year undergraduate with Christopher Elton. Harry began piano lessons aged six, joining the Junior Royal Northern College of Music in in 2022 studying piano with his long-time mentor Les Chisnall, alongside organ with Simon Mercer and conducting with Juan Ortuño. During this time he also received guidance from Peter Donohoe. After winning the 2024 JRNCM Concerto Competition Harry performed Liszt's First Concerto with the JRNCM Sinfonia under Eduardo Portal. Other competition successes have included 1st prizes in the 2020 Chopin Festival in Mazovia and 2021 Cittá di Arona Competition, and 3rd prize in the 2023 Future Stars International Piano Competition. He has performed in multiple venues across London and the north of England, including recitals at the Royal Northern College of Music, Forsyth's in Manchester, and St James's Piccadilly in London.

Leoš Janáček

Sonata 1.X.1905 'From the Street'
15 Moravian Folk Songs
On An Overgrown Path: Series I

PROGRAMME NOTES

Sonata 1.X.1905 'From the Street' *13'*

Předtucha *Presentiment*
Smrt *Death*

Herman Med Cerisha piano

Janáček's piano sonata is one of his most influential pieces, and it comes with an extraordinary story. It was inspired by the death of a 20-year-old apprentice František Pavlík, who died while demonstrating for a Czech-language university in Brno. Janáček - who fiercely supported the Czech language and Czech independence from Austria - originally wrote three movements: *Foreboding, Elegy* and *Funeral March.* During the final run through of the premiere in January1906, he snatched the third movement from the stunned pianist Ludmíla Tučková and threw it in the fire; she was forced to premiere the remaining two thirds of the piece that evening. Forewarned, she made her own copy. Just as well, because at a performance a few months later Janáček threw the entire manuscript into the river Vltava.

A century on, it seems impossible to imagine this piece being completely lost; and impossible to understand why Janáček was so self-destructive. (He finally sanctioned the remaining two movements at his 70th birthday in 1924.) Both movements are in E flat minor, transforming the 19th century sonata model in an entirely original way. Both have massive, jagged climaxes: their psychological depths sound startlingly modern.

15 Moravian Folk Songs *11'*

Ty hodiny vivanské *The clock of Vivany*
Ked si já zazpívam *When I sing to myself*
Ach, ty Jurko, Jurenko *Oh Jurko, my dear Jurko*
Maryš, moja Maryš *Mary, my Mary*
Už sa mně můj milý pryč ubírá *My lover is going*
Plelo dívča plelp len *The girl was weeding*
Slubovals mi, že mě vezmeš *You promised to marry me*
Či to pachole v noci chodí *Whose lad is that wandering at night*
Či je to děvče na tom vrsku *Whose girl is that on the hill*
Dyž já budu ležat *When I will be buried*
Běží voda, běží *Water is flowing, flowing*
Hradčanské hodiny *The clock of Hradčany*
Na černej hoře *On the black mountain*
Na Javorině *On Javorina*
V tem hrušeckém čirém poli *On the open field of Hrušky*

Andra Bačila piano

Janáček wrote these aphoristic miniatures in 1922; they're published with the words of each Moravian folksong above the right hand. All are mysterious, gestural and original, as if a late Beethoven Bagatelle has been cross-fertilised with a newly discovered Schumann sketch – all with a sprinkling of jazz harmony. Their asymmetric, playful rhythms reflect Janáček's loving study of everyday spoken Czech.

On An Overgrown Path: Series I *28'*

Arthur Kokerai piano

This superlative poetic cycle came out of a series of music books for the harmonium: arrangements of Moravian folksongs, to which Janáček contributed, gathered under the title of *Slovanské melodie.* Three of the pieces in the fifth volume (1901) became, eventually, parts

of *On an Overgrown Path,* which was completed in 1908. By now these were sophisticated mood pieces, not just folk transcriptions. The main title refers to a Moravian wedding song, the bride lamenting '*the path to my mother's has become overgrown with clover.'* The titles of each of the ten pieces are striking and mysterious. Originally Janáček left them bare, but the music critic Jan Branberger suggested to him that adding short titles would give a hint of the inspiration behind the music.

An obvious influence on Series I of *On an Overgrown Path* is Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Several commentors have noted allusions to the Promenade theme in *Our evenings,* and *Baba Yaga* in the last barn owl folk tale. Series I also reflects Schumann's *Kinderszenen* in terms of texture, unity and style, with thematic parallels between *Our evenings* and Schumann's *At the fireside,* between *Come with us!* and *Blindman's Buff.* Ultimately though, Series I of *On an Overgrown Path* (the later pieces are performed this afternoon) exists as an entirely original and haunting expression of love and loss.

Naše večery *Our evenings*
Originally called 'Go to,' *Our evenings* begins gently and nostalgically. Gradually the mood darkens; a middle section derails into violence. This enigmatic opener sets the scene for a cycle that resists being homely or cosy.

Lístek odvanutý *A blown-away leaf*
Originally called 'Declaration of love,' *A blown-away leaf* opens with the hint of a wide-eyed folk song. Soon Janáček pulls it out of shape, inserting pauses, irregular bar lengths and trills, giving an overwhelming sense of gasping edginess.

Pojd'te namí! *Come with us!*
An extrovert polka, with some darker colouring.

Frýdecká Panna Maria *The Frý'dek Madonna*
Frý'dek is close to Hukvaldy, where Janáček was born. A famed pilgrimage site, the composer draws on childhood visits and later with his wife Zdenka, evoking the hymn tune traditionally sung by pilgrims.

Štěbetaly jak laštovičky *They chattered like swallows*
A lighter chromatic interlude, dominated by an angular, folk-imbued motif. The left hand is sometimes in sync, sometimes not.

Nelze domluvit! *Words fail!*
Originally Janácek jotted 'the bitterness of reproach' as a title. It shifted to 'the bitterness of disappointment,' before emerging as the final, anguished *Words fail!* The depth of emotion overwhelms the protagonist. A greater sense of calm, or emotional exhaustion, is achieved at the end.

Dobrou noc! *Good night!*
An astonishingly minimalist - yet powerful - piece of piano writing about his daughter Olga. Often compared to

Schumann's *A Child Falling Asleep* from *Kinderszenen*, serene slumber allegorises death. Hovering around C major and almost entirely on white notes, a flickering rhythmic motif eventually takes over the melodic line – a hallmark of Janáček's later style.

Tak neskonale úzko *Unutterable anguish*
Dark harmonies and spare fragments of melody find some relief in the closing bars, marked *adagio.*

V pláči *In tears*
Janáček wrote to Jan Branberger that this grief-stuck piece was a recollection of the death of his beloved daughter Olga in 1903. *'Perhaps you will sense weeping in it... During the hot summer nights, the angelic being lay in such anguish.'*

Sýček neodletêl! *The barn owl has not flown away!*

A highly evocative story to close. The barn owl has long been associated with bad omens, from the Greeks onwards, and the word *sýček* describes both an owl and someone who's pessimistic. The cry of the owl in the right hand, and the fluttering of its wings in the left, recur throughout a piece which outlines the folk myth of an owl sitting on the roof – once he's flown away, death has come. Chordal, hymn-like passages give a grain of poignancy and warmth to a piece that's disquieting, and quietly dramatic.

BIOGRAPHIES

Herman Med Cerisha

Herman Med Cerisha is a third-year undergraduate pianist studying with Florian Mitrea. Born in Putignano in the Bari region of Italy, Herman was admitted to the National College of Music George Enescu in Bucharest when he was eight years old. In 2020 he won a scholarship to study at The Purcell School and has enjoyed considerable success in international competitions, performing concertos in Kosovo, Bucharest and most recently Cadogan Hall in London. He has also been invited to perform in prestigious venues including Wigmore Hall, the National Romanian Athenaeum and the Svetlanov Hall in Moscow.

Andra Bačila

Andra Băcilă is a pianist from Romania. She completed her first-class undergraduate degree this summer, and is continuing on the Master's course with Professor Joanna MacGregor. She made her solo debut at the Liszt Institute (Balassi Institute) in Paris in 2023; she has won numerous competitions including the Hungarian Music Festival and Future Stars International Piano Competition. She has performed as concerto soloist at the Athenaeum in Bucharest, and given recitals at the Goethe Institut in London, the multi-arts venue ARCUB, the Hungarian Liszt Institut and Romanian National Philharmonic in Brasov. Andra is an avid chamber music partner, recently invited by the Czech Philharmonic to perform at the Czech Embassy in the presence of Semyon Bychkov, and organised a fundraising chamber concert for earthquake victims in Tukey and Syria in London. She has a particular interest in programming folk music, and has also developed a passion for improvising to silent films. Following the Improvisation to Film class in the Academy Piano Department, Andra has performed at the prestigious La Giornate del Cinema Muto Festival in Pordenone, the Netherlands Silent Film Festival in Eindhoven, and the Kennington Bioscope in London.

Arthur Kokerai

Arthur Kokerai is a third-year undergraduate of Russian/Zimbabwean heritage, studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. Arthur begun his training at Moscow's renowned Gnessin School of Music, and he has performed in major Russian venues including the Moscow Conservatory and Zaryadye Concert Hall; he also won the Bronze Medal at the XI International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. Arthur is a very active composer as well as a soloist. His output in the last two years encompasses a substantial piano quintet and 60-minute violin concerto, a premiere of his 50-minute song cycle *Veronika* – settings of the early 20th century Ukrainian poet and activist Leysa Ukrainia - and a clarinet trio. Recent concerto performances include Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto no.3, Beethoven's Concerto no.1 and, just last week, the rarely played Britten piano concerto. Arthur and his family now live in Armenia.

2.30PM WAR MUSIC

Leoš Janáček

Dumka for violin and piano
Romance for violin and piano
Pohádka: Fairytale for cello and piano
Sonata for violin and piano

PROGRAMME NOTES

Dumka for violin and piano *6'*
Romance for violin and piano *5'*

Agatha Parkin violin
Hayden Miller piano

Leoš Janáček had had learnt the rudiments of playing the violin as a small boy. His youngest brother Josef was taught the violin by their father, and Leoš had to pass an exam in violin teaching in order to be employed as a state teacher in 1878. He was also taught the violin when he was sent to the old monastery in Brno, as an 11-year-old chorister.

Janáček's earliest existing composition for violin and piano was *Romance,* in 1879; he was asked to write it during his first composition lessons under Oscar Paul at the Leipzig Conservatory. Letters between him and his fiancé Zdenka show how little confidence he had: *'I am beside myself, desolate, I doubt my talent, or that I have any ability whatsoever,'* he wrote. In fact, he wrote *seven* Romances for his teacher: he marked this one 'no.4,' destroying the others. It's an example of his perseverance and his talent, while he tried to overcome the gaps in his education. Before that, his student composition *Dumka* is suitably passionate: a romantic reflection in C minor.

Pohádka: Fairytale for cello and piano
11'

Con moto
Con moto
Allegro

Doraly Gill cello
Daniel Liu piano

Although Janáček was a fierce Czech nationalist, he loved Russian culture, reading extensively in the Russian language. The initial inspiration for *Pohádka* (1910) was an epic poem *The Tale of Tsar Berendyey*, written by the Vasily Zhukovsky in 1832. A brief programme note by Janáček shows us he was particularly touched by Tsar

Berendyey's sorrow at not having children, focussing on the longings of the Tsar, his travels and return to find a child has been born. Rather than being strictly programmatic, *Pohádka* is more of a series of meditations on the story. The first movement begins with a dreamy, magical lake setting on the piano, the cello providing almost ironic *pizzicato* interjections representing the Tsar. The second movement contrasts a whimsical opening motif with an urgent, searching melody (which Steven Isserliss suggests is the evil magician Kashchei). The concluding *Allegro* opens with a trilling, dance-like tune, and ends quietly, in contemplation of a magical adventure.

Sonata for violin and piano *18'*

Con moto
Ballada
Allegretto
Adagio

Matteo Hager violin
Katya Grabova piano

The Violin Sonata in A flat minor was the third attempt by Janáček at composing a work of this kind; the first two, both student compositions written in 1880, in Leipzig and Vienna, are lost. Janáček was clear that the work, composed in the summer of 1914, was prompted by Russian military advances at the start of World War I, and his hopes for their arrival in Moravia, liberating the country from the Austrian Empire. After its initial composition, the sonata had a complicated history. Janáček made revisions between 1916 and 1920, and it reached a final version in 1922, when it was given its première in Brno followed by further performances in Salzburg, London, and Berlin.

The sonata covers a broad range of emotion, from contemplation to furious energy, and it ends on a note of introspective uncertainty. The first movement begins with the solo violin employing rhetoric of operatic intensity, followed immediately by an agitated accompaniment from the piano; over this the violin floats an aspiring, near-vocal melody that dominates the rest of the movement. The *Ballada* – which was composed first, and published separately in 1915 – is more consciously lyrical, although there is a moment of Janáčekian turbulence just before the exquisitely delicate close. This emotional volatility continues into the concluding two movements; both are also shaded by pre-echoes of the thematic material that would suffuse Janáček's 'Russian' opera, *Katya Kabanová*, published in the same year as the sonata.

BIOGRAPHIES

Hayden Miller

Hayden Miller is a fourth-year undergraduate pianist from Houston, Texas, and studies with Mei-Ting Sun. Previously he received a diploma in Piano Performance from the Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, where he studied with Piper Ward and Jennifer Hayghe. With repertoire ranging from Louis Couperin to Alexina Louie, he often travels beyond the canon of classical music, creating interdisciplinary experiences with visual artists, writers, actors, and dancers. An advocate for new music, Hayden often performs with the Academy Manson

Ensemble; *Curves of Longing*, his debut recording of music by Stewart Lane, has received play on the BBC. Additionally, Hayden has performed at the Folkestone New Music Festival alongside the RIOT Ensemble. In 2024, he participated in the first complete performance of György Kurtág's *Játékok* at the Royal Academy of Music, and appeared in the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival in London. Composers he has worked with include Hans Abrahamsen, Augusta Read Thomas, and Anna Meredith.

Agatha Parkin

Agatha began playing the violin at the age of four. At ten, she led a group of young musicians in a Vivaldi concerto alongside Nicola Benedetti at Leeds Town Hall. She gave her first solo recital at thirteen at St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, where she returned at sixteen to perform Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*. In 2023 she arrived at the Royal Academy of Music and currently studies with Sini Simonen. Recently Agatha was selected as one of only two string students to participate in an orchestral project at The Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid, as part of the Academy's Sir Elton John Global Exchange Programme.

Daniel Liu

Daniel is a second-year postgraduate pianist, studying with Tessa Nicholson. A graduate of Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, he took lessons with Murray McLachlan before reading music at Clare College Cambridge, performing frequently as a soloist and chamber musician. Daniel is also active as a composer. His piece *Fanfares* was premiered by the BBC Concert Orchestra in 2019, after winning BBC Young Composer; his more recent work includes *Miniatures for Piano Quartet (Memories of Tippett)*.

Doraly Gill

Doraly is a cellist studying under Hannah Roberts at the Royal Academy of Music for a Performance Masters, as well as second study in singing. For her undergraduate degree Doraly read Music at the University of Cambridge, during which time she was principal cellist of the Cambridge University Orchestra and performed prominent solo works with orchestra including Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations*, Dvořák's cello concerto, and Haydn's Sinfonia Concertante with Margaret Faultless. Doraly has been recognised for her performance of music for cello and voice and has premiered five new works specifically written for her at music festivals, such as Whittington and St Endellion, the Kaznowski lecture recital series and the Royal Academy Students Create festival.

Katya Grabova

Katya was born in Moscow and graduated from the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, where she studied with Tatiana Zelikman and Boris Berezovsky. She is currently studying forher Advanced Artist Diploma with Mei-Ting Sun. In 2025, she won the Aspen Piano Concerto Competition, leading to a performance with the Conducting Academy orchestra at Aspen Music Festival. Katya has performed at major music festivals, including
Rheingau Musik Festival and Leeds International Concert Season. Her recent appearances include such prestigious venues as Southbank Centre, Shanghai Concert Hall, the Great Hall of the

Moscow Conservatory, and Wigmore Hall.

Matteo Hager

The Czech-American violinist and composer Matteo Hager was born in Prague and began playing the violin at the age of four. He graduated from the Music Gymnasium, where he studied under Professor Jiří Fišer, and studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Rodney Friend. Matteo is a laureate of numerous international competitions; he was awarded the Gold Medal at the 5th Manhattan International Music Competition and the First Prize at the Academy of Václav Hudeček. In 2023 Matteo was recognized as a *Rising Star* by BBC Music Magazine, and has appeared as a soloist with the Prague Symphony Orchestra, Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra, Ukrainian-Czech Sinfonietta and I Virtuosi di Kyiv. In addition to his performing career, Matteo is a passionate composer; in 2024 he premiered his Violin Concerto in Prague, and has composed music for theatre and film, including the feature-length *Le Syndrome de l'été sans fin* (2023), directed by Kaveh Daneshmand.

3.45PM PARALIPOMENA

Leoš Janáček

Music for Club Swinging Exercises
Three Organ Pieces
On an Overgrown Path: Series II/
Paralipomena

PROGRAMME NOTES

Music for Club Swinging Exercises *5'*

Fanfara – I Rázně – Fanfara – II –
Fanfara – Mírně – Fanfara – IV – Fanfara
- V

Nalni Chen piano

The delightfully named *Music for Club Swinging Exercises* was composed in 1893. Indian club-swinging and rhythmic gymnastics was particularly popular in the Sokol fitness programme, a movement founded in Prague in the 1860s. Sokol played an important part in the development of Czech independence, and they commissioned Janáček's masterpiece *Sinfonietta* for an open-air festival in 1926. This lively little piano piece is in five sections, each prefaced with a two-bar fanfare, warning of the next exercise.

Three Organ Pieces

Předehra *Prelude 3'*
Varyto *Variations 4'*
Chorálnífantazie *Chorale Fantasia 6'*

George Herbert organ

Janáček had founded the Brno Organ School in 1881, which eventually became the Brno Conservatory of Music in 1891. He was a skilled organist and improvisor in his youth, and left a small collection of shorter pieces based on hymns, popular themes and Christmas carols. He even included a magnificent organ solo in the *Glagolitic Mass*.

A former student at the Organ School recounted: *'Janáček looked after us like a father. If someone was ill, he would come to our flat to find out how we were:*

not entirely pleasant if he discovered we were out [ie bunking off]. *The following day would be very stormy, and most of us would be thrown out of class. Usually it wouldn't last long, as Janáček's temper soon quietened.'*

These three organ pieces date from 1875, when Janácek was studying at the famous Prague Organ School. They are remarkably confident and substantial, each showing a sophisticated handling of polyphonic and romantic textures.

On an Overgrown Path: Series II/Paralipomena *20'*

Andante
Allegretto
Vivo
Piú mosso
Allegro

Daniel Liu piano

Series I of *On an Overgrown Path* had been a great success, and Janáček decided to add to the next series with two new pieces; they were published in the *Lidové noviny* newspapers, The People's News, in 1911. In 1942 (18 years after his death) three more unpublished pieces were added, under the name of *Paralipomena,* or 'supplement.' A more scholarly edition was published by Barenreiter after Lars David Kellner performed Series I and II in 2013.

Although these rarely performed pieces are untitled, they continue the atmospheric, melancholic exploration of folk music in Series I, exemplifying Janáček's unique, melancholic voice.

BIOGRAPHIES

Nalni Chen

Nalni Chen is a Taiwanese pianist, cellist and percussionist. A passionate advocate for contemporary and experimental music, following her graduation from the Royal Northern College of Music and the University of Manchester, where she received the Faculty of Humanities Dean's Award. As a soloist, Nalni has performed concertos ranging from Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1 with Hive Sinfonia, to Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with the Burnley Orchestra and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 in Malvern. Committed to making music accessible to all, she performs across concert halls and community spaces, including care homes, championing innovative repertoire for diverse audiences. Nalni's collaborative work spans contemporary and cross-disciplinary projects.

George Herbert

George Herbert studied German and Music at Cambridge, and is now studying for a Masters in Ensemble Piano with Michael Dussek and James Baillieu. Born in Manchester, his passion for music was kindled as a chorister at Manchester Cathedral. George works across the UK and Europe as a pianist; he has recently performed at Wigmore Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Salle Cortot in Paris. His recording of Richard Strauss' Sonata for Violin and Piano with Nathan Mierdl for Linn Records will be released next year, and his Signum Classics recording of Rodrigo Ruiz's *Venus and Adonis* with Grace Davidson won the Spanish prize Melomano de Oro in January 2025. He is also an Associate Artist with Tenebrae Choir.

Daniel Liu

Daniel is a second-year postgraduate pianist, studying with Tessa Nicholson. A graduate of Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, he took lessons with Murray McLachlan before reading music at Clare College Cambridge, performing frequently as a soloist and chamber musician. Daniel is also active as a composer. His piece *Fanfares* was premiered by the BBC Concert Orchestra in 2019, after winning BBC Young Composer; his more recent work includes *Miniatures for Piano Quartet (Memories of Tippett)*.

5PM FOREVER YOUNG

Leoš Janáček

Concertino for Piano and Ensemble
March of the Bluebirds for Piccolo and Piano
Capriccio for the Left Hand and Winds

PROGRAMME NOTES

Concertino for Piano and Ensemble *17'*

Moderato
Più mosso
Con moto
Allegro

Edward Harris-Brown piano
Luka Venter conductor
Agatha Parkin violin
Eleanor Holmes violin
Constance Hayward viola
Raj Bhaumik clarinet
Marcel Cress bassoon
Peter Raistrick horn

Janáček first started thinking about this chamber concerto, subtitled 'Spring,' in 1924; it was dedicated to the pianist Jan Heřman, whom Janáček had greatly admired playing his song cycle *Diary of One Who Disappeared. Concertino* recalls the Moravian countryside where Janáček grew up. In a letter to Kamila Stösslavá he told her: *'I've composed a piano concerto. There's a cricket, midges, roebuck. A torrent – and yes, a man!'*

The first movement - described as a *'grumpy hedgehog'*- is for horn and piano; the second, for clarinet and piano, is a *'fidgety squirrel.'* The other instruments join in the next movements. The atmosphere of the third is described as *'a night owl and other animals,'* while the last movement as *'a scene from a fairy tale, where everybody is arguing.'*

Concertino was premiered in 1925 by Ilona Štěpánová-Kurzová, who had premiered Dvořák's Piano Concerto in G minor. The first performance in Brno was a great success, and it was performed at the Wigmore Hall on 6th May 2026, two days after his visit to the Duke's Hall.

March of the Bluebirds *2'*

Lucy Rowan piccolo
Chuyu Wang piano

This tiny, delightful piece was written in 1924 as a duo for piccolo and piano, then reorchestrated a few months later as a movement in *Mladí* (Youth) for Wind Sextet, as *March of the Blue-Boys.*

The title has a dual meaning. Janáček's bluebirds were the Blue Boys of his childhood: the choristers of the St Augustine monastery in Brno where he

was sent at the age of eleven. The wore blue uniforms. He wrote in the manuscript: *'the little singers of the monastery cheer and whistle as they march – blue like bluebirds.'*

Capriccio for the Left Hand and Winds
17'

Allegro
Adagio
Allegretto
Andante

Joseph Havlat piano
Daphne Delfas conductor

Lucy Rowan flute/piccolo
Leonor Duarte Cunha trumpet
Leo Stemp trumpet
Ned Pettitt trombone
Jack Traynor trombone
James Owen bass trombone
Jude Smith tuba

Janáček's audacious *Capriccio* was composed in 1926 for pianist Otakar Hollmann, who had lost the use of his right arm during the First World War. Hollmann – like his contemporary and similarly afflicted fellow pianist, Paul Wittgenstein – commissioned composers to create works for left hand alone, among them Janácek, Martinů, and the Polish pianist-composer Leopold Godowsky.

In one of his letters to Kamila Janáček said that he had considered calling the work 'Defiance,' indicating Otakar's indomitable will to continue playing. But at another time he referred to the work as *'a series of pranks.'* Until the final, relatively peaceful movement, the humour seems sharp and satirical, with tremendously demanding parts for all the brass players. The lyrical, melodic tuba part (played today as originally indicated in the manuscript) has morphed into a euphonium, and in the most recent Barenreiter edition, horn.

The score opens with a march-like, cabaret theme in the piano, in dialogue with trombones and virtuosic tuba. There is a fierce mini cadenza for trumpet before the return of the piano. The second movement is dominated by a gentle, *Schumannesque* melody in the piano which alternates with complex tuba and high trumpet figurations. The flute finally enters; there is a brief *pas de deux* with the piano. The movement ends in sad resignation.

The third movement alternates between dark fluttering, and a jovial theme led by the tuba. A degree of hope is signalled by the sweetly singing flute in the finale, but disturbed by a stormy piano writing, brass interpolations and constant tempo changes. A short, chromatic piano cadenza leads to a lyrical coda, evoking past themes. Animated sextuplets in the trumpets lead to the final bellringing bars, in affirmative D flat major.

BIOGRAPHIES

Edward Harris-Brown

Edward Harris-Brown is a pianist and composer from Shrewsbury; he is a third-year undergraduate studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. He appears as a soloist, duo partner, chamber musician and jazz pianist in recitals across the country, and has had his compositions performed at venues in Shrewsbury, York, Manchester, Oxford and London. Previously Edward studied at Chetham's School of Music under Murray McLachlan, winning all the

internal piano and composition prizes. He reached the televised rounds of BBC Young Musician and was awarded the First Prize at the EPTA UK competition, First Prize at Abingdon and Worthing Concerto Competitions. He will be founded his own chamber music festival last summer, and will be the solo pianist in Grieg's re-imagining of Mozart for Linn Records, with Trevor Pinnock at Academy players.

Luka Venter

Luka Venter is a composer and conductor from Aotearoa (New Zealand) of early and new music ensembles and orchestras, with a particular passion for text and the human voice. In 2024 Luka was made Conducting Fellow of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and was assistant conductor for the UK premiere of George Benjamin and Martin Crimp's *Picture a Day Like This.* A 2023-24 Britten-Pears Young Artist, Luka worked closely with Kanako Abe, Sian Edwards, and the composer on Bushra El-Turk's *Woman At Point Zero,* in partnership with Britten Pears and the ROH Jette Parker Young Artist Programme. He is currently studying conducting with Sian Edwards at the Academy.

Chuyu Wang

Chuyu Wang is a second-year undergraduate studying under Professor Joanna MacGregor, arriving from the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou. She gave her first solo piano recital at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou aged ten; at eleven she performed at Carnegie Hall in New York, and at thirteen played all 27 Chopin études in Xinghai. Chuyu has given over thirty solo recitals across major cities in China including Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, and Zhanjiang, and has also appeared as soloist with the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra. Recent highlights include performances of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto no.2 in China last summer, and concerts with the City of London Sinfonia.

Lucy Rowan

The Scottish flautist Lucy Rowan is a first-year postgraduate studying with Michael Cox. This year she was the winner of the British Flute Society Young Artist Prize, and is on the ENO Evolve Scheme as well as the Royal Opera House Overture Scheme.

Joseph Havlat

The Australian pianist and composer Joseph Havlat is Professor of Contemporary Music in the Academy's Piano Department, and runs Piano Lab, designed to train student pianists in the many different genres of new music. Joseph arrived from Perth and completed his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with Professor Joanna MacGregor; he is a leading interpreter of contemporary music, having collaborated with John Adams, Gerald Barry, Cassandra Miller, Brett Dean and Sir Harrison Birtwistle. He has developed close relationships with Thomas Adès, under whom he has played *In Seven Days* with the LSO and premiered *Növények* at Wigmore Hall; Hans Abrahamsen, with whom he has worked to produce and record a definitive edition of 10 Studies for Piano; and Michael Finnissy, whose work Joseph performs regularly, including a BBC Radio 3 recording of Piano

Concerto no.2. Joseph is a member of the LSO percussion ensemble, with whom he has released a CD featuring the premiere recording of John Adams' two-piano work *Roll Over Beethoven* on the LSO Live label. Joseph has written music spanning from solo voice to large ensemble, including for Ensemble x.y, of which he was a founding member.

Daphne Delfas

Daphne Delfas is studying for a Masters degree in conducting with Sian Edwards at the Royal Academy of Music. She completed her Bachelor's degree reading Music at Cambridge, where she was the conductor of the Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra. Since beginning her studies at the Academy, Daphne has assisted David Bates on Royal Academy Opera's production of Handel's *Rinaldo*, participated in masterclasses with Jac van Steen and Ryan Wigglesworth, and recently conducted the Isokon Ensemble in a performance of Robin Holloway's *Fantasy-Pieces*. Daphne also works with the New Mozart Orchestra, taking orchestral music into primary schools.

Programme notes by Joanna MacGregor

Thank you for supporting the dedicated young pianists of the Academy, and all the musicians who have taken part in the 2026 Autumn Piano Festival.

The next Summer Piano Festival at the Royal Academy of Music runs over four days, between 8th-11th June 2027. See you there!