

MUSIC TALKS 2019–2020

MUSIC

IN TIME AND PLACE:

the journey continues



WELCOME TO MUSIC TALKS

Now in its seventh season, Music Talks is a small, specialist organisation launched in 2013 by a group of musicians keen to share their passion for music with the widest possible public.

Once described as the Rolls Royce of music appreciation courses, Music Talks aims to make even the most challenging musical works approachable. Our outstanding presenters are selected not just for their musical knowledge and expertise, but also for their peerless communication skills. Whether an experienced concert-goer or a newcomer to classical music, you will find the sessions absorbing, enlightening and enjoyable. I hope we will have the pleasure of your company as our musical journey continues.

For further information about Music Talks, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Susan Sturrock

Founder and Director

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FOUNDER PATRONS

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MUSIC IN TIME AND PLACE: the journey continues

Venue

Christ Church Kensington, Victoria Road, London W8 5RQ

Ten minutes from the Royal Albert Hall, five minutes from Gloucester Road tube.

Dates

Wednesday mornings 10.15 – 12.15

Autumn term 2019

October 9, 16, 30

November 6, 13, 20

Spring term 2020

February 5, 12, 26

March 4, 11, 18

This course continues last season's theme: a journey exploring the myriad directions taken by music after the legendary 'Tristan chord' unsettled our ears and recalibrated our expectations. This year we investigate a constellation of exceptional works, each a landmark in the musical firmament, all associated in some way with narrative. Whether the sensual poetry of Verlaine or the melodrama of *Pierrot Lunaire*, the bleakness of Büchner's drama or the catchy lyrics of *Carousel*, the intimate letters of a frustrated composer or the star-crossed romance of Shakespearian characters, music and word are inseparably entwined in this new course. Come and enjoy this unique journey, tailor-made for Music Talks.

"I'm addicted to Music Talks!"

"It gets better year after year."

"I would never have believed how my listening has improved."

"Absolutely enthralling every time."

"It's a privilege to be in the room."

9 October, 10:15 – 12:15

Fauré, Debussy, Ravel: Verlaine settings

1880s–90s

Presenter: **Jeremy Sams**

Paul Verlaine himself described his poetry as ‘music first... the rest is literature’. His exquisitely sensual, allusive poems proved an irresistible lure for many fin de siècle French composers including Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel and Venezuelan-born Reynaldo Hahn. Jeremy Sams takes us on a journey through some of the poet’s best known song settings, introducing us to Verlaine’s shimmering world of enchantment, in which love, desire, beauty and despair are not always what they seem.



16 October, 10:15 – 12:15

Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker (Ballet)

18 December 1892 St Petersburg

Presenter: **Karl Lutchmayer**

A staple of family Christmases the world over, curiously Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker* was not well received at its premiere and little known in the West until more than sixty years later. In this session we look beneath its apparently elegant 19th century surface to uncover a work which stands at the crossroads of romanticism and modernism, as much as at the meeting point of East and West.



30 October, 10:15 – 12:15

Arnold Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire

16 October 1912, Berlin

Presenter: **Karl Lutchmayer**

With the rise of exhibitions and publications by groups such as Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter, by 1912 German Expressionism had become well established in the fine arts. However, whilst the themes of personal angst it sought to portray were common in music, the means of expressing them had largely remained rooted in Romanticism. Looking at *Pierrot Lunaire*, we explore Schoenberg’s creation of a whole new sound world which so vividly conjured up the ghosts of pre-war Europe.



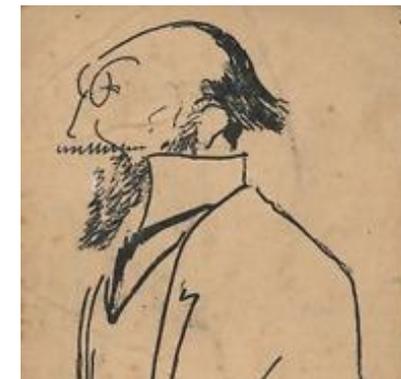
Wednesday 6 November, 10:15 – 12:15

Eric Satie: Parade

18 May 1917, Paris

Presenter: **Karl Lutchmayer**

Possibly one of the greatest artistic collaborations the world has ever seen, *Parade* brought together Diaghilev, Cocteau, Picasso, Massine and Satie in a cornucopia of surreal and Surrealist delights. But whilst the other young men were just passing through this refreshing movement, for middle-aged Satie this was one of his final flowerings in a lifetime devoted to shocking the bourgeoisie. We explore this flâneur’s life hidden in plain view, and its sudden notoriety that resulted in a jail sentence.



Wednesday 13 November, 10:15 – 12:15

Rebecca Clarke: Viola Sonata

25 September 1919, Berkshires, USA

Presenter: **Dr Katy Hamilton**

Written for an American composition competition, Rebecca Clarke’s *Viola Sonata* is a rich, virtuosic work redolent of both Vaughan Williams and the French Impressionists. In fact, the competition’s adjudicators suspected that the piece (submitted anonymously) might be by Maurice Ravel. One of her best-loved pieces, it is a testament to Clarke’s brilliance as a virtuoso violist, and a superb composer. The score is headed with the poetry of Alfred de Musset: ‘Poet, take up your lute; the wine of youth / Ferments this night in the veins of God.’



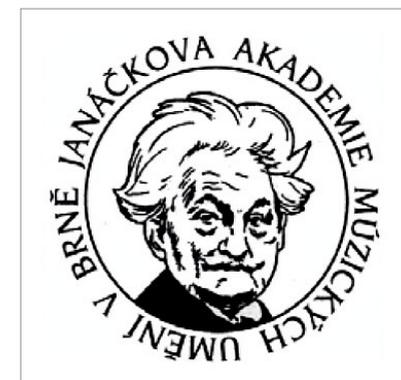
Wednesday 20 November, 10:15 – 12:15

Leoš Janáček: Intimate Letters

11 September 1928, Brno

Presenter: **Dr Katy Hamilton**

‘I maintain,’ Janáček once wrote, ‘that a pure musical note means nothing unless it is pinned down in life, blood and locale; otherwise, it is a worthless toy.’ In his passionate *Second String Quartet*, which he named ‘*Intimate Letters*’, the seventy-three-year-old sought to depict and exalt Kamila Stösslová, a woman over 35 years his junior with whom he exchanged more than 700 letters. This astonishing declaration of love and obsession was premiered a month after Janáček’s death.



Wednesday 5 February, 10:15 – 12:15

Alban Berg: *Wozzeck* 14 December 1925, Berlin
 Presenter: **Dr Katy Hamilton**

Alban Berg's first opera was such a stupendous success at its premiere that the forty-year-old composer had to be consoled because he hadn't caused a scandal! Based on an early nineteenth-century play by Georg Büchner, it blends the operatic tradition of Wagner with the harmonic freedom of Schoenberg, Berg's mentor. A dark tale of social inequality, exploitation and high passion, *Wozzeck* is a tour de force of dramatic musical modernism.



Wednesday 12 February, 10:15 – 12:15

Sergei Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet*
 11 January 1940, Leningrad
 Presenter: **Karl Lutchmayer**

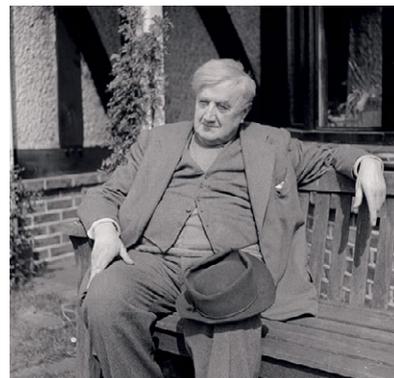
Amidst the turmoil of Soviet artistic policies, the need to re-create ballet as an art form for the people, and Prokofiev's own wish to give Shakespeare a happy ending, the premiere of *Romeo and Juliet* almost didn't happen. Eventually, five years after its composition, and with significant changes unauthorized by the composer, it was finally performed to acclaim and the Stalin Prize. In this session, we explore Prokofiev's curious legacy under the gaze of Stalin.



Wednesday 26 February, 10:15 – 12:15

A lyrical twilight: English song
 1914 – 1945
 Presenter: **Dr Katy Hamilton**

In the early years of the 20th century, many prominent English composers were still under the influence of late 19th century German Romanticism. In this session, Katy Hamilton with Emily Gray and Timothy Salter explore the drawing away from this influence towards a more characteristic English musical language, through songs by composers including Hubert Parry, Ralph Vaughan Williams, York Bowen, Cyril Scott, Herbert Howells and Stanley Bate.



Wednesday 4 March, 10:15 – 12:15

Olivier Messiaen: *Quartet for the end of time*
 15 January 1941 Görllitz, Germany
 Presenter: **Karl Lutchmayer**

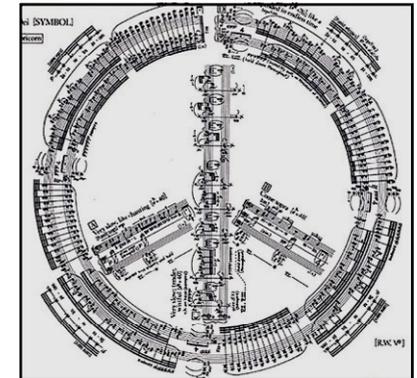
There may be no more extraordinary premiere than that of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* in Stalag VIII/A, before a camp of Prisoners of War sitting in the mud. With an instrumentation based on the availability of musicians, and a concept based on the book of Revelations, one can hardly imagine a more earthbound gaze towards the infinite. Karl Lutchmayer places this unique moment and the work it spawned in its complex network of musical, political, cultural and theological contexts.



Wednesday 11 March, 10:15 – 12:15

The 21st century musician
 Presenter: **Dr Katy Hamilton**

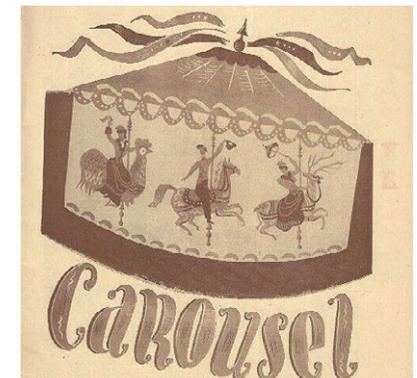
What does it mean to be a working composer today? From commissions and grants to spur-of-the-moment inspiration, what must a composer consider to make a living from their craft? Katy Hamilton, in discussion with a leading British composer of our time, considers the working life of creative musicians today, their interactions with publishers and record producers, and the art of building relationships between composers and performers to bring new works to the concert hall and beyond.



Wednesday 18 March, 10:15 – 12:15

Rodgers & Hammerstein: *Carousel*
 19 April 1945, New York
 Presenter: **Jeremy Sams**

After the success of *Oklahoma* in 1943, composer Richard Rodgers and lyricist-dramatist Oscar Hammerstein obtained permission to create a musical based on *Liliom*, a popular 1909 play by the Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnár. Though initially it seemed difficult to rework as a musical, in 1945 Rodgers noted optimistically: "I began to see an attractive ensemble—sailors, whalers, girls who worked in the mills up the river, clambakes on nearby islands, an amusement park on the seaboard, things people could do in crowds, people who were strong and alive and lusty". Thus *Carousel* came into being, and has continued to thrill audiences for three-quarters of a century.



DR KATY HAMILTON

Dr Katy Hamilton is fast becoming one of the UK's most sought-after speakers on music, providing talks for a host of organisations including Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, BBC Proms, Ryedale Festival and Oxford Lieder Festival. In addition, she regularly writes programme notes for the Salzburg Festival, North Norfolk Festival and Naxos music, and is a frequent contributor to BBC Radio 3's Record Review. Katy is an editor of the *Brahms in the Home* and the *Concert Hall* (2014) and *Brahms in Context* (2019) and has also published widely on the music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She has taught at the Royal College of Music, the University of Nottingham, Middlesex University and City Lit. You can find out more about her work at www.katyhamilton.co.uk



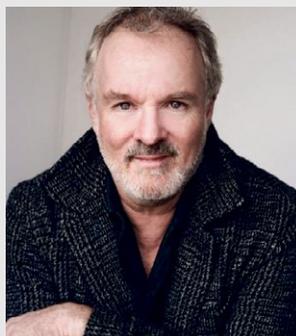
KARL LUTCHMAYER

is renowned as both concert pianist and lecturer. A Steinway Artist, he performs across the globe and has worked with conductors including Lorin Maazel and Sir Andrew Davis, and performed at all of London's major concert halls. He has broadcast on Radio 3, All India Radio and Classic FM, where is known as a forceful advocate for contemporary music. Karl is a regular guest lecturer at conservatoires around the world including New York's Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. He studied at the Royal College of Music in London and the Moscow Conservatoire, and was recently awarded the Bharat Gaurav lifetime achievement award. Currently based at New College, Oxford, alongside his busy performing career, Karl is pursuing research into the piano concert arrangement and its challenge to the work concept. www.karllutchmayer.com



JEREMY SAMS

Jeremy Sams is an internationally acclaimed director, writer, translator, adaptor and composer, who works with enviable authority in repertoire as diverse as Shakespeare, Sondheim, Mozart, Wagner and film (his 2005 score for *Enduring Love* won an Ivor Novello Award). Sams's dazzlingly diverse talents have taken him inter alia to ROH, ENO, Garsington Opera, Welsh National Opera, Metropolitan Opera New York, Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Almeida, London's West End, and Broadway.



Fees:

Whole course: £425

Autumn 2019 only: £225

Spring 2020 only: £225

Telephone: 07872 505922

Email: mail@musictalks.org.uk

Card: 020 7591 4314 (from 1 June 2019, 10:00-16:00 Mon-Fri, £1.95 fee)

BACS: Sort code: 20-96-89 Account no: 40014958 Name: Music Talks

Cheque: Payable to Music Talks, posted to MT, 65 Kenilworth Avenue, London SW19 7LP

Please note that place on Music Talks courses and events are non-transferable, and refunds will only be made if the course or event is cancelled.



- 4. Brno
- 2. Berkshires, Mass. USA
- 3. Berlin
- 1. Görlitz

- 5. London
- 6. New York
- 7. Paris
- 8. St Petersburg/Leningrad

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE TO KNOW...

In addition to its regular courses, Music Talks also offers one-off public talks on music, and musical events specifically designed for private parties or special occasions. Wherever appropriate, live performances are provided by students or alumni of the Royal College of Music and other London music colleges. At the end of each season, donations are made to two charities that support the development of young professional musicians:

- **Royal College of Music** www.rcm.ac.uk

- **Music for Youth** www.mfy.org.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Verlaine	Babelio.com
Tchaikovsky	Imperial Ballet's original production, c.1910
Schoenberg	Self-portrait, 1910 (Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna)
Clarke	BBC
Janáček	Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, Brno
Satie	Erik Satie tocando el armonium: Santiago Rusinol, 1891
Wozzeck	Poster by Hans Heinrich Palitzsch, 1974
	Poster by Jan Lenica, 1964, MOMA (brochure cover)
Prokofiev	Royal Swedish Opera production, 2010
Messiaen	French Prisoners of War, Robert Weber, May-June 1940
Vaughan Williams	Ralph Vaughan Williams Society
Carousel	Theatre programme for Broadway premiere



