

LSO ST LUKE'S

BBC
RADIO 3

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

Thursday 22 January 1-2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Vaughan Williams and his Circle: Nash Ensemble

Elizabeth Maconchy
Clarinet Quintet
Ralph Vaughan Williams
Phantasy String Quintet
Rebecca Clarke
Piano Trio

Nash Ensemble

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

LSO

Nash Ensemble

Simon Crawford-Phillips

piano

Richard Hosford

clarinet

Stephanie Gonley

violin

Jonathan Stone

violin

Eivind Ringstad

viola

Rachel Roberts

viola

Adrian Brendel

cello

The Hawksmoor Space is open from one hour before the concert and during the interval (where applicable), selling hot and cold drinks. Please note, we can accept card payments only. Only cold drinks will be permitted inside the Jerwood Hall.

In accordance with the requirements of Islington Council, persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly forbidden without formal consent from LSO St Luke's.

Please make sure that digital watch alarms and mobile phones are switched off during the performance.

Please recycle this programme after use.

Clarinet Quintet

Elizabeth Maconchy

- 1 Poco lento
- 2 Scherzo: Presto
- 3 Lento
- 4 Allegro molto

In the late 1980s, in an interview with this writer, Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–94) smiled warmly when her teacher Ralph Vaughan Williams' name was mentioned. She recalled how different his attitude had been to that of many other male composers and teachers when she was trying to make her name in her twenties. 'This is awfully good', he had told her, indicating one of her scores. 'Might annoy one or two people, don't you think?'

Maconchy's Clarinet Quintet was written much later, in 1964, and its penchant for long singing lines and folk-inflected themes and dance rhythms does to some extent reflect Vaughan Williams' influence. But Maconchy's mindset had been European influenced from early on, and her studies in Prague with the composer Karel Jirák opened her ears to the brilliant, vibrant originality of Bartók and Janáček, who left their mark on her own highly individual chamber works. Something of the delicious pungency of Eastern European folk music can be felt in this Quintet, along with – especially in the driven finale – its wild exultation.

Phantasy String Quintet

Ralph Vaughan Williams

- 1 Prelude
- 2 Scherzo: Prestissimo
- 3 Alla Sarabanda
- 4 Burlesca: Allegro moderato

In his twenties and thirties, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) had produced a fair amount of promising chamber music. By 1912, the time he came to write his *Phantasy Quintet*, recent success in choral and orchestral music had begun to pull him in new directions. But a commission for a 'Phantasy' chamber work was enticing. The archaic-looking term 'Phantasy' reflected a fascination with the English string consort fantasies of the 16th and 17th centuries, fresh from the creatively liberating experience of composing the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

Vaughan Williams was a more-than-competent viola player, and he loved the viola's rich, often melancholic sound, so it is no surprise to find him making good use of the two violas in his Quintet line-up: it is the first viola that opens the Prelude, and at the same time sets the tone. The rapid 7/4 patterns of the Scherzo show the influence of the composer's rhythmically adventurous friend Gustav Holst, then the muted Alla Sarabanda brings us closer to the soundworld of Tudor viol music. But it is Vaughan Williams' playfulness that dominates the Burlesca finale.

Piano Trio

Rebecca Clarke

- 1 **Moderato ma appassionato**
- 2 **Andante molto semplice**
- 3 **Allegro vigoroso**

By the time Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) came to maturity, in the early 20th century, it was widely accepted in this country that women could excel in literary forms. But when it came to composing, ideas lagged some way behind. Despite encouragement from some more enlightened persons (notably Ralph Vaughan Williams), Clarke struggled, and things became much harder in 1910 when her far-from-sympathetic father cut off her funds, forcing her to earn her living from performance (she was an outstanding viola player).

This, combined with a tendency to serious depression, eventually discouraged Clarke so much that she largely withdrew from composition. Fortunately, she did manage to produce a series of outstanding chamber works in the 1920s, high amongst them this Piano Trio (1921), written after a shared competition prize had brought what she called 'my one little whiff of success.' It is a remarkably impassioned, probing

piece, beginning with a striking fanfare-like theme on the piano which is developed with great imaginative resource throughout the first movement.

The second movement continues to explore the first's sense of unease, right from the almost Bartókian folk-like violin melody at the beginning. The folkish element becomes more energetic and dance-like in the finale, and the ending strikes what seems to be a romantically triumphant note, but it is difficult not to hear an ironic tone in this – 'my one little whiff of success'?

Programme Note Writer

Stephen Johnson studied cello at the Northern School of Music, Manchester (later the Royal Northern College), and went on to study composition with Alexander Goehr at Leeds University. He broadcasts frequently for BBC Radio 3, 4 and World Service.

Nash Ensemble



© Matthew Johnson

Regarded as a standard-bearer of British music-making around the world, the Nash Ensemble celebrated its 60th anniversary during its 2024/25 season with a range of programmes at London's Wigmore Hall, where they have presented a themed season every year since 1979. They have toured widely in Europe and North America and are frequent guests at the UK's most prestigious music festivals, including Aldeburgh, Edinburgh and BBC Proms.

The Nash Ensemble have recorded prolifically over many decades, showcasing their wide repertoire across the classical and romantic canons and up to the present day. Recent releases for Hyperion include string sextets by Tchaikovsky and Korngold, and Debussy chamber works. A recording of Ravel's chamber music will be issued by Onyx later this year.

The group are well-known for their long and fruitful partnerships with many contemporary composers, such as Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Helen Grime, Colin Matthews and Julian Anderson. Some 300 new works have been premiered since the Nash Ensemble's formation, of which over 200 have been specially commissioned.

The Nash Ensemble was founded and directed by Amelia Freedman until 2025. Her tremendous body of work was recognised with numerous awards, including honorary membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2024. The group is now co-directed by two of its performing members, cellist Adrian Brendel and pianist Simon Crawford-Phillips.

About LSO St Luke's

LSO St Luke's, the London Symphony Orchestra's home on Old Street, has recently reopened following a major transformation that enhances every aspect of our work – from performance and recording to learning and community engagement. The refurbishment has brought renewed acoustic excellence to the Jerwood Hall, new state-of-the-art recording facilities, improved front-of-house areas and step-free access, as well as low-carbon, energy-efficient upgrades throughout the building. Supported by a successful fundraising campaign and designed by Levitt Bernstein, the project marks the next chapter in our 20-year history as a creative hub for musicians, local communities and young people.

Free Friday Lunchtime Concerts

23 January & 6 February 2026 12.30pm

We continue to welcome audiences through our popular Free Friday Lunchtime Concerts, with upcoming dates tomorrow, on 23 January, and 6 February. These informal, bite-size events introduce listeners of all ages to classical music.

Explore LSO St Luke's
iso.co.uk/lsoatlukes

Tangram and Asian Comedy

Showcase: REMIX

3 & 4 February 2026 7.30pm

On 3–4 February, the artist collective Tangram – Associate Artists at LSO St Luke's – returns to LSO St Luke's with REMIX, an energetic blend of new music and live comedy showcasing East and Southeast Asian creative voices. Hosted by comedian Sam See and featuring musicians Beibei Wang, Junyan Chen and Dasom Baek alongside a line-up of guest comedians, the programme reimagines works by Debussy, Puccini, Weber and others alongside brand-new commissions.

Euchar Gravina: ħsejjes iduru, iduru

Jerwood Composer+ Showcase

21 February 2026 7pm

Euchar Gravina presents a contemporary chamber music concert built around old, weathered recordings – including some of Malta's oldest, unheard for nearly 100 years.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

At The Barbican

Frédéric Chopin Piano Concerto No 2

plus Igor Stravinsky and Alexander Borodin

with Gianandrea Noseda

and Seong-Jin Cho

Thursday 12 February 7pm

Sunday 15 February 7pm

Laura Bowler The White Book

with Barbara Hannigan

and Bar Avni

Wednesday 4 March 6.30pm

Thursday 5 March 7pm

Edward Elgar The Dream of Gerontius

with Sir Antonio Pappano

Sunday 19 April 7pm

Tuesday 21 April 7pm

Explore the full season

iso.co.uk/2526

FUTURE CONCERTS

BBC
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Thursday 5 February 2026 1–2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

THOMAS DUNFORD Solo Recital

John Dowland
A selection of songs
Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger
Toccata No 6 from 'Libro Primo
d'intavolatura di lauto'
Joan Ambrosio Dalza
Calata alla Spagnola from
'Intabolatura de Lauto, Libro No 4'
Robert de Visée
Sarabande and Chaconne
Marin Marais
Les Voix Humaines
Erik Satie
Gymnopédie No 1; Gnossienne No 1
J S Bach
Chaconne from Partita for
Violin No 2 BWV 1004

Thomas Dunford lute

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

Thursday 26 February 2026 1–2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND HIS CIRCLE Kitty Whately & William Vann

Ralph Vaughan Williams
Four Poems by Fredegond Shove; The
Sky Above the Roof; Four Last Songs
Rebecca Clarke
Return of Spring; Colour of
Life; Tears; The Seal Man
Elizabeth Maconchy
In Fountain Court; Ophelia's
Song; The Woodspurge
Grace Williams
Black-Eyed Susan from 'The
Billows of the Sea'

Kitty Whately mezzo-soprano
William Vann piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3