

LSO ST LUKES

BBC
RADIO 3

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

Thursday 5 March 1–2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND HIS CIRCLE

Geneva Lewis & Sam Armstrong

Maurice Ravel

Violin Sonata No 1 in A minor

Grace Williams

Violin Sonata

Benjamin Britten

Reveille: Concert Study for Violin and Piano

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The Lark Ascending for Violin and Piano

Geneva Lewis violin

Sam Armstrong piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

LSO

STILL TO COME

Simon Crawford-Phillips and Friends

10 & 17 April; 1 May

Pianist Simon Crawford-Phillips showcases works from Bach transcriptions to Schubert and Clarke.

Thomas Dunford and Friends

16 April

Lute and percussion share the stage in the final instalment of Thomas Dunford's series of lunchtime concerts, featuring percussionist Keyvan Chemirani.

Antoine Tamestit and Bertrand Chamayou

30 April

Two extraordinary late works from Brahms and Shostakovich, written for the evocative, earthy tones of the viola.

Save with MultiBuy Discounts

£12 tickets when you book
3+ concerts

[iso.co.uk/bbcradio3](https://www.iso.co.uk/bbcradio3)

The Hawksmoor Space is open from one hour before the concert, 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.

Violin Sonata No 1 in A minor

Maurice Ravel

In 1908, when Maurice Ravel taught Vaughan Williams in Paris, nobody knew his first effort at a violin sonata, which was composed in 1897, when he was engaged in his own studies with Gabriel Fauré at the Paris Conservatoire. Without doubt, the composer of *The Lark Ascending* would have loved its clarity and refinement of tone, and particularly the way it sustains its rapturous lyricism through a nearly 15-minute single-movement flight of imagination.

Though still youthful, the sonata already reveals Ravel's fastidious craftsmanship: textures of remarkable transparency, subtle harmonic turns, and a violin line that seems to float effortlessly above a finely etched piano part. In its poise, restraint and delicacy, it offers an early glimpse of the distinctive voice that Vaughan Williams encountered in Paris – a voice that prized precision, colour and clarity above all.

At the time Vaughan Williams studied with Ravel, he wanted above all to get away from the Germanic attitudes that prevailed in English classical music at the time. Vaughan Williams felt he needed to clarify his orchestral textures, but also his deeper thinking.

Violin Sonata

Grace Williams

- 1 Allegro molto ritmico**
- 2 Andante sostenuto**
- 3 Allegro scherzando**

Grace Williams (1906–77) wrote her Violin Sonata in 1930, just after finishing her studies with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music. A close friend, fellow student Benjamin Britten had encouraged her to investigate continental modernism (still much frowned upon in British academic circles). To her delight, Vaughan Williams agreed, helping her get a scholarship to study with Arnold Schoenberg's former pupil Egon Wellesz in Vienna.

The impact of Wellesz's thinking can be felt in the Sonata's fast outer movements, though memories of Vaughan Williams persist in the central *Andante sostenuto*. Ever her own severest critic, Williams wrote on the Sonata's manuscript, 'second movement worth performing, first and third not good enough'. It remained unknown until the violinist Madeleine Mitchell discovered it in 2018 and found that the whole piece was much more than 'worth performing'. It has been steadily growing in popularity ever since.

Reveille: Concert Study for Violin and Piano

Benjamin Britten

In public, Benjamin Britten (1913–76) made no secret of his distaste for Vaughan Williams' music – this despite the older man having waded in to rebuke the orchestra for fooling around at a rehearsal for the premiere of Britten's *Our Hunting Fathers*. But privately, his feelings were more complicated, and he did record the cycle *On Wenlock Edge* with Peter Pears. This 'Concert Study' was written in 1937, for Antonio Brosa, who had given the premiere of Britten's Violin Concerto the previous year. Listeners may hear a parody of Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* in the opening slow music, but before long Reveille is living up to its title, with a scintillating, at times almost grotesque display of virtuoso fireworks.

The Lark Ascending

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Has the huge popularity of Vaughan Williams' (1872–1958) *The Lark Ascending* blunted appreciation of its originality and subtle ambiguity? Heard here in the original version for violin and piano, it is often dismissed as pastoralist nostalgia, a rose-tinted evocation of an innocent rural paradise that never really was. But as a left-leaning folksong collector, Vaughan Williams had first-hand experience of rural life and knew of its hardships. When he wrote *The Lark Ascending* (1914), his country was on the brink of a catastrophic war, a war whose impact his close friend Gustav Holst was already anticipating in his terrifying 'Mars' from *The Planets*. By the time he came to orchestrate *The Lark Ascending* in 1921, Vaughan Williams had

experienced the horror of that war in full as a medical orderly in the trenches. Granted, for some the work is pure airborne joy; but for others there is something achingly poignant about it, too. It is as though the composer was painfully aware of the terrible fragility of everything he depicts: the rural life that would soon be just a memory, its young men (whose songs we hear in the more animated central section) who would soon be slaughtered, and of the bird itself. The bird is free, ecstatic, but finally fading and disappearing for ever. Is this a celebration, or a heartfelt elegy?

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.

Geneva Lewis

violin



© Matthew Holler

American/New Zealand violinist Geneva Lewis has forged a reputation as a musician of consummate artistry whose performances speak from and to the heart. She has been lauded for the 'remarkable mastery of her instrument' (CVNC) and hailed as 'clearly one to watch' (*Musical America*).

Named a BBC New Generation Artist (2022–24), Lewis is also the recipient of a 2022 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and a 2021 Avery Fisher Career Grant. She was also Grand Prize winner of the 2020 Concert Artists Guild Competition, the winner of the Kronberg Academy's Prince of Hesse Prize (2021), *Musical America's* New Artist of the Month (June 2021), a Performance Today Young Artist in Residence and a YCAT Concordia Artist.

Deeply passionate about chamber music, Lewis has had the pleasure of collaborating with prominent musicians such as Jonathan Biss, Glenn Dicterow, Miriam Fried, Kim

Kashkashian, Gidon Kremer, András Schiff and Mitsuko Uchida. She has performed in venues and festivals such as Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Marlboro Music Festival, Kronberg Festival, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Ravinia Festival and Chamberfest Cleveland.

Lewis received her Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory as the recipient of the Charlotte F Rabb Presidential Scholarship, studying with Miriam Fried, and went on to study with Professor Mihaela Martin in the Professional Studies Programme at the Kronberg Academy. Before that, she studied with Aimée Kreston at the Colburn School of Performing Arts.

Geneva Lewis currently performs on a composite violin by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini (c 1776), generously on loan from a charitable trust.

Sam Armstrong

piano



© Andrej Grilo

Hailed as ‘a major new talent’ (*International Piano*) and a ‘pianist of splendid individuality’ (*Arts Desk*), English pianist Sam Armstrong has made solo debut recitals at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall in New York and Wigmore Hall. He has also appeared as concerto soloist with the National Symphony of Ecuador.

Passionate about chamber music, Armstrong has performed with musicians including Elina Buksha, Valeriy Sokolov, Krzysztof Chorzelski, Viviane Hagner, Hannah Roberts, Ralph Kirshbaum, Alban Gerhardt, Lars Wouters van den Oudenweijer and Pablo Barragán. He has appeared at festivals including Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Krzyzowa Music, Mecklenburg-Vorpommen, Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music and Ravinia, as well as venues such as Seoul Arts Centre, Esplanade Singapore, Kumho Art Hall Seoul and Bridgewater Hall.

He studied with Helen Krizos in Manchester at the Royal Northern College of Music and subsequently in New York with Richard Goode at Mannes College of Music. He won the most important awards for piano in both institutions: First Prize in the Royal Northern College of Music’s Piano Recital Prize and the Nadia Reisenberg Debut Award from Mannes College of Music. He also worked with John O’Conor in Dublin and in masterclasses with Leon Fleisher, Menahem Pressler, Murray Perahia, Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Roger Vignoles.

In September 2023, Armstrong joined the faculty of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama as Senior Tutor in Keyboard Chamber Music.

FUTURE BBC RADIO **3** CONCERTS

Friday 10 April 2026 1–2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

SIMON CRAWFORD-PHILLIPS AND FRIENDS

Vers la vie nouvelle

Nadia Boulanger

Vers la vie nouvelle

Lili Boulanger

Nocturne and Cortège

Gabriel Fauré

Les berceaux

Camille Saint-Saëns

Violons dans le soir

Gabriel Fauré

Mandoline

Francis Poulenc

Sonata for Violin and Piano

Jeanne Landry

Mort quand tu me viendras prendre

Charlotte Sohy

Chants de la lande, Op 4: No 3, 'Anathème'

Lili Boulanger

Le retour

Nadia Boulanger

D'un matin de printemps;

Soleils couchants

Simon Crawford-Phillips piano

Mary Bevan soprano

Malin Broman violin & viola

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

Thursday 16 April 2026 1–2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

THOMAS DUNFORD AND FRIENDS

Thomas Dunford & Keyvan Chemirani

John Dowland

A selection of works for solo lute

Keyvan Chemirani

To Bandégui; Improvisation

Zarb; Shérazade; Dawar

Thomas Dunford

She is a mystery; Now I see

you; Trust the wind

The Beatles

A better love

Marin Marais

L'Américaine

J S Bach

Prelude, Sarabande and Minuets

from Cello Suite No 1 BWV 1007

Thomas Dunford lute

Keyvan Chemirani percussion

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3