LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

BBC RADIO 3

Thursday 5 November 2026 12.30–1.35pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

PROKOFIEV SONATAS

Andreas Brantelid and Julien Quentin

Sergei Prokofiev
Cello Sonata in C major Op 119
Dmitri Shostakovich
Cello Sonata in D minor Op 40

Andreas Brantelid cello
Julien Quentin piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

LSO

STILL TO COME

Mahan Esfahani & Friends
26 November 2026
4 & 11 February 2027

Harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani curates a three-concert journey from dynamic chamber partnerships to solo recital.

Dutch Masters
2 December 2026
15 January & 5 March 2027

A series of three concerts exploring musical connections to the Netherlands, from Baroque gems for recorder and harpsichord to Romantic chamber music.

Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective
22 January, 11 March & 3 June 2027

Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective traces the piano quartet from Héritte-Viardot and Saint-Georges to Fauré and Dvořák.

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The Hawksmoor Space
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.

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.

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.

Cello Sonata in C major Op 119

Sergei Prokofiev

1 Andante grave
2 Moderato
3 Allegro, ma non troppo

 1949  24 minutes

Two years before he wrote his Cello Sonata, Prokofiev had been so astounded by the playing of the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich that he'd rewritten his earlier Cello Concerto as a gritty, brilliant 'Symphony-Concerto' especially for his new friend. Later, he heard Rostropovich in concert with the pianist Sviatoslav Richter, and decided that he had to write them both a sonata. With the notorious 'Zhdanov Decree', which condemned all forms of 'anti-people music', a recent memory, Prokofiev knew he had to tread carefully. Once completed, the Cello Sonata had to be officially assessed. Richter recalled this spirit-sapping stage in the process: 'Before playing it in concert, we had to perform it at the Composer's Union, where these gentlemen decided the fate of all new works. During this period more than any other, they needed to work out whether Prokofiev had produced a new masterpiece or, conversely, a piece that was 'hostile to the spirit of the people.''

It seems Prokofiev had made all the right gestures. But, as his composer friend Nikolai Myaskovsky observed after the public premiere, the end result was 'a miraculous piece of music.' The Cello Sonata begins with the cello alone, down in its lowest register – a singing bass voice echoing the distinctive, flavoursome sound of the deep basses in Russian Orthodox liturgical music. Prokofiev's ardent lyricism re-emerges later, and there are hints of his pianistic toccata style in the rapid figures towards the end of the first movement, later becoming almost frenzied on the cello. But the final bars return to the opening's apparent serenity.

Something like the old spirit of Prokofievian fun and games comes to the surface in the scherzo-like second movement, though with a new tenderness and childlike sense of mischief. Exuberant play also dominates the finale, though at one point the tempo drops and the cello, now muted, sings of something that could be contented or achingly sad. The Sonata ends with both instruments putting on a magnificent, sonorous display of shared triumphant fireworks.

Cello Sonata in D minor Op 40

Dmitri Shostakovich

1 Allegro non troppo
2 Allegro
3 Largo
4 Allegro

 1934  25 minutes

Shostakovich's Cello Sonata was written during a turbulent emotional period. The premiere of his opera *A Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* in January had been a sensational success, and it was soon being heard across the world. But the ever-susceptible Shostakovich had subsequently fallen in love with a young student. Technically, he and his wife Nina had, and to some extent enjoyed, an 'open marriage', but the strain of this latest infatuation was too much, and Nina left him. The breech was healed by the end of the year, but it threw the composer off balance. As ever when under strain, Shostakovich held everything together by composing, and the project that functioned as a creative life-raft this time was the Cello Sonata, composed for his friend the cellist Victor Kubatsky. This was something of a departure for Shostakovich. It was his first major chamber piece – until then Shostakovich seems to have shared the view of some Communist aesthetes that chamber music was 'bourgeois' salon music, not 'music of the people'. But the Cello Sonata's deep seriousness is clear from the start, and it intensifies in the darkly inward-looking Largo. Not even the wild, silent-cinematic humour of the finale quite manages to banish that impression.

Despite moments of impish or grotesque humour, the Cello Sonata is also much more classically arranged than other major Shostakovich works of the period. Shostakovich would rein in his super-charged inventiveness still further in his Fifth Symphony (1937), partly for political reasons (by then he'd been publicly reprimanded for 'leftist distortion', 'chaos' and dissonant 'modernism'), but also, it seems, because he'd begun to realise that expression could be enhanced, not repressed, when it was formally 'contained'. There's certainly no suggestion of clipped creative wings here. The wonderful, eloquent long cello melody that opens the first movement is proof enough of that.

Andreas Brantelid

cello



© Ida Wang

Andreas Brantelid was born in Copenhagen in 1987 to Swedish / Danish parents. After receiving early tuition from his father Ingemar, he made his soloist debut at the age of 14 in a performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto with the Royal Danish Orchestra in Copenhagen. Today, Brantelid is one of the most sought-after performing artists from Scandinavia, winning worldwide critical acclaim for his ability to make the music not only sound but speak, dance and sing.

Brantelid won first prizes in the 2006 Eurovison Young Musicians Competion, the 2007 International Paulo Cello Competition and, in subsequent years, received music awards and fellowships including the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2008, the BBC's New Generation Artist 2008–2011 and The European Concert Hall Organisation 'Rising Star' tour in the 2008/09 season. In 2015, he received the Carl Nielsen Prize in Copenhagen, and since 2022 he has been teaching at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Brantelid plays the 1707 'Boni-Hegar' Stradivarius, which has been made available to him by the generous support of Norwegian art collector Christen Sveaas.

Julien Quentin

piano



© Julien Mignot

French pianist Julien Quentin has established himself as a versatile and sensitive musician, exhibiting great maturity and poise. His remarkable depth of musicianship and distinct clarity of sound coupled with flawless technique make him an artist in demand as both soloist and chamber musician.

He has made successful recital debuts in Paris (Salle Cortot), Geneva Conservatoire Hall and Bargemusic in New York. He has appeared as a soloist with the Wroclaw, Qatar and Córdoba Philharmonic Orchestras under such conductors as Tommaso Placidi, Paul Biss and Han-Na Chang. Regularly invited to numerous international festivals, Quentin's appearances in Europe include Verbier, Lucerne, Gstaad, Montreux, Zermatt, Dresden, Braunschweig, Schwetzingen, Ludwigsburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Beethovenfest Bonn, Radio France Montpellier and Saint Denis. A regular performer in North America, he has appeared at the Ravinia, La Jolla and Mostly Mozart Festivals in the US. He has broadcast in Canada, the US, Japan and in countries across Europe.

Quentin is a keen chamber musician and has collaborated with artists such as Nicolas Altstaedt, Emanuel Ax, Lisa Batiashvili, Gautier Capuçon, Corey Cerovsek, Martin Fröst, Sol Gabetta, David Garrett, Nelson Goerner, Ilya Gringolts, Gary Hoffman, Lawrence Power, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Sayaka Shoji, Kirill Troussov and István Várdai.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

At The Barbican

Half Six Fix: Prokofiev
with Gianandrea Noseda
Wednesday 9 December 2026 6.30pm

Prokofiev and Shostakovich
with Gianandrea Noseda
and Leonidas Kavakos
Thursday 10 December 2026 7pm

Half Six Fix: Prokofiev 5
with Sir Simon Rattle
Wednesday 14 April 2027 6.30pm

Debussy, Filidei and Prokofiev
with Sir Simon Rattle
and Antoine Tamestit
Thursday 15 April 2027 7pm

Half Six Fix: Prokofiev
with Gianandrea Noseda
Wednesday 12 May 2027 6.30pm

Prokofiev and Sibelius
with Gianandrea Noseda
and Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider
Thursday 13 May 2027 7pm

Explore the full season
lso.co.uk/2627

FUTURE CONCERTS

Thursday 26 November 2026 12.30pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

MAHAN ESFAHANI & FRIENDS

Mahan Esfahani and Lars Anders Tomter

Johann Sebastian Bach
Sonata in G minor BWV 1029
Wilhelm Friedemann Bach
Sonata in C minor
Poul Ruders
Quickstep Rag
Johann Sebastian Bach
Sonata in D major BWV 1028
György Kurtág
Selections from Signs, Games and Messages

Mahan Esfahani harpsichord
Lars Anders Tomter viola

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BBC RADIO 3

Friday 15 January 2027 12.30pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

DUTCH MASTERS

Lucie Horsch & Jonathan Cohen

Music by **J S Bach, Jacob van Eyck, Anna Amalia of Prussia, Benjamin Britten, Isabella Leonarda** and **Jean-Marie Leclair**.

Lucie Horsch recorder
Jonathan Cohen harpsichord

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

Thursday 21 January 2027 12.30pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

PROKOFIEV SONATAS

Giorgi Gigashvili

Frédéric Chopin
Piano Sonata No 2
Sergei Prokofiev
Piano Sonata No 8

Giorgi Gigashvili piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3