

## Thames Concerts 2025/26 Series – Artistic Director's notes

It gives me great pleasure to present this series of concerts, showcasing a vibrant mix of talent, and taking place in the wonderful home of the series, St Andrew's Church, Surbiton. Thames Concerts' position as the premier long-term promotor and organiser of high-quality chamber music performances in the Borough since 1961 remains unrivalled. Our attractive ticketing options and incentives continue of course, and the 10% discount scheme on the concert days continues at nearby establishments. All evening concerts start at 7.30pm, with doors (and the excellent value bar) opening at 6.45pm.



Last year saw a gentle expansion to the series, which now houses seven evening and four morning concerts. This allows me to broaden the range of genres we offer and increase our capacity to showcase the excellent work from the local schools, colleges and university. As always, we are proud to give a platform to emerging young artists, but this series also sees the welcome return of several exceptional and more seasoned performers.

Thames Concerts has not always been the quickest to embrace the online world, but we are at [thamesconcerts.com](https://thamesconcerts.com), on Facebook and X, and from this year we are also on Instagram, so do feel free to check this out in an idle moment.

The series begins on **Saturday 13 September** with a remarkable group, the award-winning **Mēla Guitar Quartet**. Guitarists Zahrah Hutton, Michael Batten, George Tarlton and Matthew Robinson play famous repertoire from France and Russia, plus several contemporary works.

**Saturday 18 October** sees the first piano duet concert in a series for many years, with the talented Tong brothers playing works by Mozart, Ravel, Debussy, Chaminade, and Schubert's famous *Fantasie*. Also on **Saturday 18 October, 10.30am**, an admission-free morning concert takes place, given by **Polly May** (mezzo-soprano) and **William Slingsby** (clarinet), in music by Schubert, Gordon Jacob, Judith Weir and others. I am pleased to be at the piano for this performance.

On **Saturday 15 November** we are proud and delighted to host the **Eddie Harvey Centenary Concert**. St Andrew's Church will reverberate to the sound of a full big band of seasoned industry players, plus guests, all paying tribute to the great performer, arranger, educator and founder member of the Dankworth Seven, **Eddie Harvey** (1925-2012). This concert will be preceded by a panel discussion at 6.45pm.

**Saturday 6 December** sees the welcome return of distinguished soprano **Joanne Lunn**, in an inspiring evening of Bach, Handel, Purcell, Rameau and Couperin, based around the theme of 'Sweet Bird'. Joanne is joined by renowned performers **Rachel Beckett** (flute), **Alastair Ross** (harpsichord) and **Reiko Ichise** (viola da gamba).

An organ recital has long been a feature of every series and taking us into 2026 we welcome back the esteemed Berlin-based concert organist **Daniel Clark**, on **Saturday 17 January**, in a programme of Bach, Leighton, Martin, Bartmuss and Guilmant.

On **Saturday 31 January** we welcome back violinist **Sabine Sergejeva** and pianist **Craig White** for an all-Ravel programme entitled 'Violin Visions'. Sabine and Craig, both virtuoso performers, have a special affinity with this repertoire, and in addition to playing the complete Ravel works for violin and piano in this concert, they will also present several exciting arrangements.

The series will close on **Saturday 14 February** with the **Trio Arisonto**. Comprising Musicians' Company Young Artist pianist **Harry Rylance**, violinist **Ezo Sarici**, and horn player **Annemarie Federle**, the Trio play a sublime and appropriately romantic programme of Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Wagner and Clara Schumann.

Thames Concerts enjoys a reputation for supporting young up-and-coming musical talent in the local community. This includes those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who experience other barriers to participation, and students from the local schools and colleges. In 2015 I introduced admission-free Surbiton Farmers' Market Day coffee concerts, running parallel to the main evening series, intended to showcase this work, as well as allowing audiences to experience chamber music on a smaller scale. Those involved are free to present a programme of their choosing from any musical styles and genres. So far, many hundreds of students from over 15 local schools have taken part, and audiences are continually impressed by the high standard of performance they present.

This season, we will be treated to a visit from post-graduate music students studying at **Kingston University** on **Saturday 15 November, 10.30am**, and the annual visit from students from across the borough studying with **Kingston Music Service** on **Saturday 20 December, 10.30am**. Students from **Tiffin Girls' School** take the slot on **Saturday 17 January, 10.30am**.

On behalf of my fellow trustees, we look forward to meeting you at some point during the series. More details may of course be found as usual at [thamesconcerts.com](http://thamesconcerts.com).

**Ben Costello**

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