

Ilkley Concert Club



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**KALEIDOSCOPE CHAMBER
COLLECTIVE**
piano quintet



Wednesday 14th May 2025

King's Hall

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PROGRAMME

Walker

Lyric for Strings

Korngold

Suite for two violins, cello and
piano (left hand), op 23

INTERVAL

Amy Beach

Piano quintet in F sharp minor, op 67

Ilkley Concert Club

Registered Charity No. 506886

The Club records its appreciation of the invaluable assistance and support
given by the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council



EVERYONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY
TO BE PART OF A MUSIC GROUP

PROGRAMME NOTES

Although the three composers represented in tonight's programme are very different at first glance, they actually have much in common. They were all child prodigies and exceptional pianists; they were all affected by the social and political mores of their day – George Walker because of his colour, Amy Beach because of marital conventions and Erich Wolfgang Korngold because of the advance of Nazism; and they were all influenced by both European and American musical traditions. Walker and Beach were American but studied in Paris and Germany respectively and Korngold, a Czech, wrote an important part of his overall corpus – film music – in America. The three composers all suffered a decline in popularity and performance during the middle to late twentieth century but are now enjoying a revival. The works featured tonight are among the best-known and highly regarded of each composer.

GEORGE WALKER (1922-2018)

Lyric for strings

George Walker received his musical education at Oberlin College and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he was in the same class as Samuel Barber. He was the first African American to graduate with a diploma in piano and composition. This was the beginning of a long string of distinguished 'firsts' for Walker both in performing and in academe. He went on to study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and between 1950 and 1956 toured European capitals playing the classical repertoire in high-profile concerts. In 1996, he became the first black composer to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music. However, despite his reputation as a pianist and growing reputation as a composer (eventually comprising almost one hundred works in all classical musical genres except opera), Walker constantly found difficulty in being accepted as a serious composer, being continually confronted with the stereotypical association of black musicians with jazz.

The Lyric for Strings began as the second movement of Walker's First String Quartet, written in 1946 while he was a graduate student at the Curtis Institute. His grandmother, to whom he was very close, died in 1945 and he dedicated the elegiac slow movement to her,

adding the title 'Lament'. By the time the quartet was finished, his professors had already played the movement in a radio broadcast and in 1990 Walker arranged it for string orchestra and gave it its present name. The piece rapidly became Walker's most performed and popular composition, something that surprised him; in a radio interview he observed how 'reaction to this work has been something that I never could have anticipated'. It has been compared to Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings which also began life as a quartet slow movement, that of Barber's op 11, composed in 1936.

After a slow and contemplative start, the music builds to a climax with the string writing in many places reminiscent of Elgar, before settling down to a peaceful conclusion.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 6 minutes

**ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD Suite for two violins,
(1897-1957) cello and piano (left hand) op 23**

Präludium und Fugue. Kräftig und bestimmt

Walzer. Nicht schnell, anmutig

Groteske. Möglich rasch

Lied. Schlicht und innig. Nicht zu langsam

Rondo – Finale (Variationen). Schnell, heftig.

Frequently credited with the creation of the symphonic film score, Erich Wolfgang Korngold was born into a musical middle-class Jewish home in Brünn, Moravia (now known as Brno, Czechia). The family moved to Vienna in 1901. Korngold was an exceptionally musically gifted child, often compared to Mozart and Mendelssohn. By his 19th birthday, he was a recognised composer of opera, piano music and works for orchestra and his compositions had been performed by Nikisch, Schnabel and Bruno Walter.

Korngold was appointed a Professor at the Vienna Academy of Music in 1929 and during this period wrote his two works that incorporated a piano part for the left hand only: the single-movement Concerto for Piano Left Hand and the Suite (to be played tonight). These works were both commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein (brother of the philosopher Ludwig) who had trained as a concert pianist but who lost

his right arm during the 1914-1918 war. Determined to continue playing, Wittgenstein developed a remarkable left-hand technique and works were also written for him by Ravel, Britten and Prokofiev.

With the rise of Nazism, Korngold and Wittgenstein left Austria for the United States where Korngold established a successful career in film music, while always trying to maintain his position as an established and versatile European composer. However, his return to Austria in 1954 to re-establish his musical contacts and career there was not successful and he returned to America where he died, disappointed and dejected, believing that he and his work were forgotten.

The Suite op 23 is a highly original work, one that uses precisely described conventional movement forms within a chiefly tonal language and, although for small forces, is written on a grand scale. It opens with a long and impressive cadenza for solo piano, highlighting the left hand from the beginning. Following a charming waltz, the third movement *Groteske* is, in fact a scherzo and trio, constructed from a relentless moto perpetuo with the cello prominent in the middle section. Korngold links the final two movements by bringing back the fourth movement *Lied* melody at a faster tempo to weave among the final variations.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 36 minutes

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea, and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

AMY BEACH
(1867-1944)

Piano quintet in F sharp minor, op 67

Adagio – Allegro moderato

Adagio espressivo

Allegro agitato – Adagio come prima – Presto

It was no surprise to her family that Amy Beach became a musician as she could sing forty songs accurately by her first birthday and within a year was improvising counter-melodies. She began piano lessons at the age of six and gave public recitals as a young child, playing Handel, Beethoven and Chopin. As her parents refused to allow her to study in Europe, Beach's formal training in harmony and counterpoint was given by a local teacher between 1881-1882. Thereafter she taught herself by translating the standard French treatises on orchestration by Berlioz and Gevaert into English, and buying every available book on composition. Eventually, her body of work included songs, choral music, solo works for piano and chamber and symphonic compositions mainly in the Romantic tradition, although she later developed an interest in atonal music.

Beach made her concert debut in Boston when she was sixteen and, for the next two years, concentrated on virtuoso public performances which many years later brought her to the attention of Rachmaninoff, with whose music she felt an affinity. She married in 1885 and, at her husband's insistence, she restricted her public performances to only two each year. Nevertheless, Beach gradually achieved fame as a composer. Her Mass in E flat major was first performed in 1892 followed by an important milestone, the Gaelic Symphony, in 1896. She was the soloist in both her Piano Concerto (1900) and Piano Quintet (1907). After the death of her husband, Beach spent about three years in Germany where her music was not universally admired (one prominent critic gave the Quintet only qualified praise), although its overall reception was favourable and she was praised as the first American woman 'able to compose music of a European quality of excellence'.

The Piano Quintet is, in effect, a homage to Brahms, specifically to his Piano Quintet in F minor op 24 from which Beach takes the second theme of the fourth movement and references it in all three movements. Together with a reprise of the first movement *Adagio* in the finale, these references give the work a satisfying cohesiveness.

First performances at ICC

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

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KALEIDOSCOPE CHAMBER

COLLECTIVE piano quintet

A tremendously warm welcome to members of Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective in this their first visit to Ilkley. With a flexible line up, featuring many of today's most inspirational musicians, and an ardent commitment to diversity through its creative programming, Kaleidoscope broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has enjoyed residencies at Aldeburgh, Cheltenham and Ischia festivals. In 2020, Kaleidoscope was appointed Associate Ensemble at Wigmore Hall, where the group makes multiple appearances each season, and was invited to give the Hall's 120th birthday concert in May 2021.

Tom Poster (piano) is a musician whose skills and passions extend well beyond the conventional role of the concert pianist. He is described as 'a marvel, (who) can play anything in any style' [The Herald], 'mercurially brilliant' [The Strad], and as having 'a beautiful tone that you can sink into like a pile of cushions' [BBC Music Magazine]. He studied with Joan Havill at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and at King's College, Cambridge. He won First Prize at the Scottish International Piano Competition 2007 and the keyboard section of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition in 2000. He has premiered solo, chamber and concertante works by many leading composers, made multiple appearances at the BBC Proms, and his exceptional versatility has put him in great demand at festivals internationally. Tom is co-founder and artistic director of Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective along with Elena Urioste, who together, dreamed up the idea in 2017.

Elena Urioste (violin) is an avid chamber musician and is also the founder and Artistic Director of Chamber Music by the Sea, an annual festival on Maryland's Eastern Shore. She has been a featured artist at the Marlboro, Ravina, La Jolla, Bridgehampton, Moab, and Sarasota Music Festivals, as well as Open Chamber Music at Prussia Cove, the Cheltenham Music Festival, Switzerland's Sion-Valais International Music Festival, and the Verbier Festival's winter residency at Schloss Elmau. She is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and the Julliard School. Personal accomplishments include first prizes at the Sphinx and Sion International Violin Competitions, and a 2022 BBC Music Magazine Award for 'The Jukebox Album'. Elena believes that we should all strive to spend less time looking at screens, that Oxford

commas should be required, and that people should clap whenever they feel moved to do so during concerts.

Savitri Grier (violin) combines her passion for chamber music with a love of making music on a large scale, and divides her time between performing with the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Born and raised in London, Savitri has been based in Europe since 2017. She has held permanent principal and leader positions in the Budapest Festival Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich, and most recently as Principal Second Violin of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Paris. Savitri has been invited to play and direct with Kammerakademie Potsdam and Chineke! String Ensemble. She is a graduate of Oxford University, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Universität der Künste Berlin, where she studied with David Takeno and Nora Chastain.

Rosalind Ventris (viola) is a leading advocate for her instrument and has an international career as a soloist and chamber musician. She frequently performs as part of the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective and is the violist of flute, viola and harp ensemble Trio Anima. As a recitalist she has performed at the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, Dublin International Chamber Music Festival and further afield and as soloist she has worked with the European Union Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, English Chamber Orchestra and more. In the current season Rosalind appears as soloist with the Castalian Quartet at the Cowbridge Music Festival (recorded for future broadcast by the BBC). Rosalind is the Director of Musical Performance and Performance Studies at the University of Oxford, and is a Professor of Viola at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Laura van der Heijden (cello) is recognised as one of the leading cellists of her generation. Recipient of the 2025 Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award, she continues to captivate audiences and critics alike with her deeply perceptive interpretations and engaging, imaginative programming. A graduate of Cambridge University and the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin, Laura has studied with renowned tutors including Antje Weithaas and Leonid Gorokhov. She has performed chamber recitals together with Timothy Ridout, Katya Apekisheva, Max Baillie, the Redon Quartet and the Brodsky Quartet along with her association with the Kaleidoscope Collective. She plays a late-seventeenth-century cello by Francesco Ruggieri of Cremona, on generous loan from a private collection.

Compiled by Paul Hurst

CLUB NOTES

Help Musicians

Our traditional May Concert collection for Help Musicians comes round again. This is our 48th year of collecting for Help Musicians and in that time we have collected over £27,000.

If you wish to donate we are providing two ways. A bucket collection as you exit the Hall this evening. Envelopes are available for those who can gift aid their donation. Alternatively you can donate online.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/ilkley-concert-club-may-2025-appeal>

3rd Waterman Recital - 11 June 7:30pm King's Hall

The Leeds International Piano Competition 2024 Bronze medal winner, Vietnamese pianist Khanh Nhi Luong is performing this year in the annual series dedicated to Fanny Waterman's memory. The evening will also feature special guest performances showcasing the exceptionally talented young winners of the Waterman Recital Medals at the Wharfedale Festival of Piano.

Ilkley Concert Club members get an exclusive discount using the code ICC2 at checkout.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/wharfedale-piano-festival-waterman-series/khanh-nhi-luong-the-2025-waterman-piano-recital/e-ajlmzz>

For information contact Linda Wellings
Linda.m.wellings@gmail.com or 07822 422136



2025 Autumn Afternoon Concerts

This autumn we will present our 5th series of Afternoon Concerts with young musicians from the RNCM who are nearing the end of their studies and preparing for professional careers. The concerts give performance experience for the students and a delightful hour of enjoyment for the audience. If you have friends or neighbours who find it hard to get to evening concerts do let them know about these events, they are open to all.

Dates for your diary: Thursday 6 November
 Thursday 20 November
 Thursday 27 November

All concerts run from 2.30 to 3.30 pm with unreserved seating. Tickets will be on sale from October.

Chris Skidmore, Chair

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4 Feb 2026 Julian Bliss clarinet Carducci Quartet

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22 Apr 2026 Calefax Reed Quintet

Bach, Franck and Mozart

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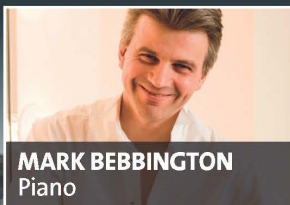
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