



EVENT PROGRAMME

FROM FRANCK TO FANTASY

Monday, 8 June 2026, 11.30am

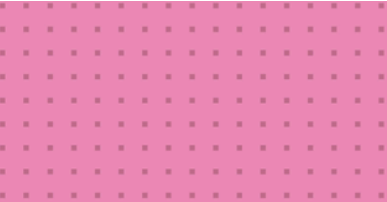
Picture Gallery, Founder's Building

There will be no interval during this event.

Estimated event finish time: 12.30pm

Please no flash photography or visual/audio recording throughout the event.

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WHO WE ARE

Quintessene are five musicians who all grew up in Hong Kong and found themselves, across different years, studying music together at Royal Holloway, University of London. The name is a play on quintet and quintessence — five people, and what we share.

Today's programme is something we've put together with a specific feeling in mind: the kind of concert where you leave having heard pieces you might not have known before, sitting alongside ones you do, and feeling glad you came. Alongside the warmth of Ravel and the youthful intensity of a teenage Franck, the programme also makes space for Fürstenau and Stöhr — composers less often on concert bills, but whose music deserves to be heard and enjoyed in a room full of people.

Chamber music at its best feels like a conversation, and that is what we hope to bring this afternoon, we hope you enjoy the concert.

YOUR PERFORMERS

Flute/ Piano

Eunice Chan

Piano

Janice Choi

Violin

Paul Kam

Soprano

Jacinta Lam

Cello

Evelyn Pong

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César Franck (1822- 1890): Piano Trio Op. 1, No. 1 in F-Sharp Minor

I. Andante con moto

Born in Liège to a Flemish family with considerable musical ambitions, César Franck was propelled into a performing career almost from birth, giving concert tours of Belgium as a child prodigy before his family relocated to Paris so that he might study at the Conservatoire. Though he would later become celebrated above all as an organist and as a late-career composer of brooding cyclic masterworks — the Violin Sonata, the Symphony in D minor — his Op. 1 trios represent his most public early statement of intent

Published in 1841 and dedicated to King Leopold I of Belgium, the set of three trios was written partly to impress and partly to establish Franck's credentials as a serious composer rather than merely a keyboard virtuoso. The first trio, in F-sharp minor, is striking for an eighteen-year-old's work: the opening Andante con moto moves with a restless, searching quality, its main theme passed between the three instruments in a way that already hints at the long, shapeshifting melodic lines that would become Franck's hallmark. There is both youthful ardour and something strangely autumnal here — a melancholy that sits just beneath the surface of the flowing accompaniment.

Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937): Ma mère l'Oye (Mother Goose Suite)

Ravel occupies a singular position in French music: meticulous to the point of obsession, deeply drawn to the miniature and the stylised, and possessed of an orchestrational genius that made even simplicity sound like a conjuring trick. Born in the Basque country near the Spanish border, he spent most of his creative life in and around Paris, and although he is often grouped with Debussy under the loose label of Impressionism, he consistently resisted the comparison, preferring to think of himself as a classicist with a taste for the artificial.

Ma mère l'Oye was composed originally as a piano duet between 1908 and 1910, written for the young children of his close friends Ida and Cipa Godebski — specifically for Mimie and Jean, who were expected to perform it themselves, which explains its deliberately simple keyboard writing. The suite draws on fairy tales familiar from Charles Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy: Sleeping Beauty, Tom Thumb, Laideronette (a Chinese empress enchanted into ugliness), Beauty and the Beast, and the fairy garden itself. Ravel's touch throughout is one of deliberate naivety — pentatonic scales, modal harmonies, and delicate textures that evoke the gauze-like world of childhood memory rather than childhood itself. The suite was later orchestrated and expanded into a ballet (1912), but in its original intimate form it retains something irreplaceable: the sense of a very adult imagination tenderly pretending to be small.

Anton Bernhard Fürstenau (1792 - 1852): Die Flöte

A.B. Fürstenau was one of the most admired flautists of his generation in the German-speaking world, holding a position at the court of Oldenburg and performing widely across Europe at a time when the flute was moving rapidly from a predominantly aristocratic parlour instrument towards the concert platform. He came from a musically gifted family — his son Anton Bernhard Fürstenau would go on to become an equally celebrated virtuoso — and his compositions were written first and foremost to showcase what the instrument could do in the hands of a skilled player.

Die Flöte ("The Flute") is a characteristically elegant work, inhabiting the world of late Classical grace with a lightness of touch that reflects both the instrument's lyrical capabilities and the performance aesthetic of the period. The piece is as much a portrait of the flute itself — its singing tone, its agility, its capacity for ornament — as it is an abstract musical argument. In this sense it belongs to a proud tradition of instrumental self-celebration, writing that is at once technically demanding and utterly charming.

Liebliche Flöte, wie wohnt in dir die
Fülle des Süßen!
Und im Herzen wie tief regst du die
Liebe, die Liebe, die Lust!
Viele der Lippen öffnest du zart,
voll schmeichelnden Hauches, voll
schmeichelnden Hauches,
Und an jeglicher hängt küssend ein
Amor, ein Amor und kos't.
O das süße Geschätz, o das süße
Geschätz
Der beweglichen Lüfte mit Göttern!
O das Götter, das Göttergefühl,
Welches den Busen bewegt,
welches den Busen, den Busen,
den Busen bewegt

*Lovely flute, how the fullness of
sweetness dwells within you!
And in the heart, how deeply you
stir love, love, and desire!
Many lips you open tenderly, full of
caressing breath, full of caressing
breath,
And on each one a Cupid hangs
kissing, a Cupid, and fondles.
O the sweet chatter, o the sweet
chatter
Of the nimble breezes with the
gods!
O the divine, the divine feeling,
Which stirs the breast, which stirs
the breast, the breast, the breast,
stirs!*

Richard Stöhr (1874 - 1967): Suite for Flute, Violin, Cello and Piano, Op. 76

II. Waltz (Tempo di Valse)

Richard Stöhr led one of the more extraordinary lives of any composer of his era. Born in Vienna, he trained as both a physician and a musician — completing a medical degree before dedicating himself fully to composition and theory — and joined the faculty of the Vienna Academy, where he taught counterpoint and harmony for decades. When the Nazis annexed Austria in 1938, Stöhr, who was Jewish, was forced to flee; he eventually settled in the United States, teaching at the Curtis Institute of Music and later at Saint Michael's College in Vermont. He lived to ninety-two, his long life spanning Brahms and the Beatles.

His compositional language remained rooted in the late Romantic Viennese tradition throughout, warmly tonal and crafted with the precision one might expect of a trained theorist. The Suite Op. 76 for flute, violin, cello and piano makes genial, inventive use of this unusual combination of colours. The second movement, marked Tempo di Valse, is pure Viennese charm: a waltz that acknowledges its origins in the ballroom

while being thoroughly at home in the recital hall. The lilting triple metre is passed between the instruments with wit and affection, a reminder that Stöhr, for all the turbulence of his biography, never lost his faith in music as a source of uncomplicated pleasure.