

Late Music 2026

Saturday 11th April – 7:30pm

Amabile

Lesley Schatzberger (clarinet)

Nicola Baxter (cello)

Paul Nicholson (piano)

Introduction

Welcome to the third concert in our 2026 season, where we are delighted to welcome back Amabile to Late Music. Today's programme features two premieres, music by our patron Nicola LeFanu, and a rare performance of a work by American composer Robert Muczynski.

York-based clarinettist Lesley Schatzberger, cellist Nicola Tait Baxter and pianist Paul Nicholson present a truly innovative programme that includes the UK premiere of David Lancaster's *Canzone Sospeso* and a world premiere from composer David Power.

At the heart of the programme is a rare performance of Robert Muczynski's *Fantasy Trio*, a work that combines rhythmic drive with lyrical intensity and is seldom heard in UK concert programmes. Alexander von Zemlinsky's Trio in D minor is also a must-listen-to work. Lesley (Schatzberger) believes that this will be the first performance of the Trio in York.

Programme

Thea Musgrave: *Canta Canta*

Steve Crowther: *Morris Dances*

Nicola LeFanu: *Lullaby* (clarinet and piano); *Lullaby* (cello and piano)

David Power: *Candidate* – WP

Robert Muczynski (1929-2010): *Fantasy Trio*, Op.26

– Interval –

David Lancaster: *Canzone Sospeso* UKP

Alexander von Zemlinsky (1872-1942): Trio in D minor, Op.3

Thea Musgrave: *Canta Canta*

Thea Musgrave was born in Scotland and initially studied medicine, but relates that “I found myself always going into the music school to see what was happening, so eventually I thought ‘what’s going on here’: that’s how I came to study music, and not medicine, at Edinburgh University.” After graduating she went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, who taught many of the 20th century’s most prominent composers, amongst them Aaron Copland, Lennox Berkeley, Elliot Carter and Philip Glass. Musgrave moved to America in 1972, where she still lives as she approaches her 100th birthday.

This short piece is taken from *A Cantata for a Summer’s Day* written in 1954, towards the end of her time in Paris. The poems of the Cantata describe a summer’s day: the original song is a setting of a poem by Maurice Lindsay which describes the orange tiger lily burning bright in the hot summer sun.

Lesley Schatzberger

Steve Crowther: *Morris Dances*

Morris Dances was originally written in 2012 as a solo piano piece dedicated to Steve Crowther’s friend Philip Morris. The piano piece takes the form of a theme with 11 variations, all personal in nature. In 2024 the composer transcribed five of the variations for clarinet, cello and piano, adding one more in 2025. He describes these thus:

A Song of Innocence 1 (for George)

The world seen through a child’s eyes - pure, full of wonder, and trusting.
Simple and playful.

Parting of the Ways? (for Eileen and Michael)

A lover’s tiff – perhaps: somewhat heated, hurt, unresolved.

A Moment Passes (for Noëlle)

Written for Noëlle, a Buddhist who, at the time, was living with AIDS. Her meditative ritual was a deep source of spiritual truth and renewal - a continual reaffirmation of wholeness.

A Song of Experience (for Roger McMeeking)

The world as perceived by an adult - conscious of suffering and hypocrisy. Darker in tone, touched with irony and the ghost of jazz.

Emma Walks (for Emma)

A second song of innocence - my daughter Emma taking her first tentative steps.

Love Song (for Absent Friends)

A quiet remembrance - a tender and reflective dance.

Steve Crowther

www.stevcrowther.co.uk & clueless13.substack.com

Nicola LeFanu: *Lullaby* (clarinet and piano); *Lullaby* (cello and piano)

These two short night pieces, composed in 1988, are linked in their material but somewhat different in their approach. In the clarinet duo it is as if a mother talks to her child at bedtime. The duo is a collection of tiny miniatures: the fast music is peopled with the characters of bedtime stories; in the slow music the mother watches her sleeping child.

The cello duo is further into the night. It is one continuous song, in which the mother sings as much for herself as for the child.

Nicola LeFanu

David Power: *Candidate* – WP

This short piece for Bb clarinet, cello and piano was written at the request of Amabile and I am grateful to them for this opportunity. The piece is a 'tune and accompaniment' work with the piano forming the accompaniment and the clarinet and cello – sometimes doubling each other and sometimes not – providing the tunes. I fear I am unable to explain the title which just pinged into my head and stayed there during the course of composing the piece but seems none the worse for that.

David Power

Robert Muczynski (1929-2010): *Fantasy Trio*, Op.26

Allegro energico

Andante con espressione

Allegro deciso

Andante molto e sostenuto - Allegro

Robert Muczynski was a first generation American born in Chicago, his father having emigrated to the USA from Poland, and his mother from Slovakia. He studied piano and composition under Alexander Tcherepnin at DePaul University and went on to win many awards for his compositions. Muczynski pursued a career as both a pianist and composer, though as a performer he was mostly a proponent of his own music. In 1960 he became composer-in-residence at the University of Arizona, Tucson, a position he held until 1988.

The Fantasy Trio, which he wrote in 1969 at the request of colleagues in Tucson, is a compact work in four movements. Despite Muczynski saying in a 1987 interview with classical music radio presenter Bruce Duffie 'This is one of my big chamber works', the piece is concise, lasting only about 13 minutes. In the same interview, he said 'I prefer to lean toward the more succinct or terse kind of writing. I just feel there is no point in padding this piece. If I've made my statements, then let's get off and that's it!' His compositional style is recognisably mid 20th century American – basically tonal and neoclassical, with plenty of rhythmic energy, but that is not to say that it lacks an emotional palette. The Fantasy Trio is dedicated to the film maker Harry Atwood, who was his long-time partner, and for whom he also wrote nine film scores.

Lesley Schatzberger

Interval

David Lancaster: *Canzone Sospeso* UKP

Canzone Sospesa, for cello and piano, explores the way that time passes. It was composed in the summer of 2023 when I was also making a song setting of Dylan Thomas' lyric poem 'The force that through the green fuse...' and both are concerned with the passing of time and how it simultaneously creates and destroys us. At times the music presses relentlessly forward but elsewhere movement seems suspended (even though for the performers the tempo remains constant throughout). Canzone Sospesa was completed in Aulus-les-Bains, high in the Pyrenees - where time sometimes seems to stand still - and was first performed in Teatro dal Verme, Milan, in November 2023 by members of Trio Chimera.

David Lancaster

Alexander von Zemlinsky (1872-1942): Trio in D minor, OP.3

Allegro ma non troppo

Andante

Allegro

Zemlinsky was born in Vienna, and at the age of 12 was given a place at the Vienna Conservatoire to study piano and, later, composition. He went on to also become a conductor, and from 1911 until 1927 was musical director at the Deutsches Landestheater in Prague. During his time in Prague he guest conducted the Czech Philharmonic, giving many premieres, including works by Mahler, Smetana, and Janáček. In 1927 he took up a conducting post in Berlin but with a partly Jewish background, the rise of Nazism in 1933

became a serious threat and he fled to Vienna. After Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938 he was forced to flee again, first back to Prague, and then settling in New York.

In Zemlinsky's music there is a thread of connection from Brahms to the Second Viennese School. His earlier works are firmly embedded in late Romanticism, but within this we hear experimentation in tonality. Brahms was so impressed when he heard Zemlinsky's clarinet trio in 1895 that he recommended the young composer to his publisher, Simrock: hence the trio was Zemlinsky's first published work. It was around this time that Zemlinsky met Schoenberg, to whom he gave informal tuition. The two became close friends, and, eventually, brothers-in-law, when Schoenberg married Zemlinsky's sister, Mathilde. The marriage was not to last, and neither was the friendship.

The opening movement of the clarinet trio is expansive, and whilst it shows the influence of Brahms, it could not be mistaken for Brahms's music. We have passion, turbulence, and shifting chromatic harmonies. This is followed by a songful andante with moments of fantasy, and then a brief, urgent and agitated finale with a slightly surprising coda.

Lesley Schatzberger

Amabile

Lesley Schatzberger – Clarinet

Nicola Tait Baxter – Cello

Paul Nicholson – Piano

Amabile is an enterprising ensemble based on a clarinet, cello and piano trio, comprising prize-winning and much-recorded artists. The group has established a reputation for imaginative programming and dynamic performances. Amabile likes to highlight some surprisingly neglected composers, and also enjoys expanding the repertoire with newly commissioned music.

<https://amabile.uk>

Next Concert

York St John Takeover Concert - Saturday 2nd May, 1:00pm

Late Music

Late Music has been championing new music in York for over 40 years. It was founded in 1981 as Soundpool by composers Michael Parkin, Anthony Adams and Ian Taylor. In 1991, composers Steve Crowther and David Power formed the acclaimed Late Music Festival, which later evolved into Late Music with David Lancaster. Much of its reputation as a respected promoter of new music is due to our former Director and friend, Peter Boardman.

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