



Investec International Music Festival announces winner of the inaugural Surrey Hills Young Composer Competition

Investec International Music Festival (IIMF) is delighted to announce the prize-winners of the inaugural Surrey Hills Young Composer Competition, launched by the festival as part of its celebrations this year of the 150th anniversary and strong Surrey connections of composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

As well as presenting world-class performances across the Surrey Hills region each year, IIMF is deeply committed to encouraging and inspiring young people to appreciate and become involved in music-making, be it as a performer, composer or audience-member. The success of this first competition clearly demonstrates that there is a wealth of talent and enthusiasm for classical music thriving in our local schools today, and IIMF looks forward to building on the inaugural year's achievements, alongside its ongoing support for music education in local primary schools (see Charitable Status note below for further details) and regular provision of performance opportunities for young artists.

1st prize: *On Reigate Hill* by Matty Oxtoby (15 yrs – Reigate Grammar School)

2nd prize: *Leith Hill* by Will Everitt (17 yrs – Reed's School)

3rd prize: *Piano Trio in A* by Advait Jagannath (15 yrs – Tiffin School)

**Runners up: *Piano Trio in c minor* by Borimir Ivanov (14 yrs – Tiffin School) &
A Roam Through Spring by Jamaal Kashim (14 yrs – home-schooled)**

The entries were assessed anonymously by the competition jury: **Wu Qian** (pianist and IIMF Artistic Director), **Charlotte Bray** (Ivor Novello Award winner and composer of IIMF's 10th anniversary commission 'Germinate) and **Steven Goss** (composer and Head of Composition at the University of Surrey).



Matty Oxtoby – 15 yrs old, and a former prize-winner in the Lower Juniors section of the BBC's Young Composer Competition – drew inspiration from his favourite place in the Surrey Hills which he describes as having been 'a great escape' during the recent lockdowns. '*At the end of the day*' he says, '*Reigate Hill helped keep me sane.*'

His work traces the progress of a day on Reigate Hill, opening with the background hum of the M25 and the sounds of birdsong at daybreak, building to a peak as wildlife and people alike busy themselves at the height of the day, and drawing to a calm, reflective close as the sun sets.

Matty commented: '*I am really pleased to have been awarded first prize, particularly given my piece is about Reigate Hill which is one of my favourite places in Surrey to be. It will be great to hear it played by the Sitkovetsky Trio in May.*'

The jury commented: ‘The competition has been a huge success in attracting so many high quality entries, and the winning work is full of colour and imagination. Both the first and second prize winners stand out as inventive, individual voices, and the third prize winner is a rich, varied and accomplished piece.’

IIMF Artistic Director Wu Qian commented: ‘I couldn’t be more thrilled with the outcome of our inaugural competition. It’s been wonderful to see so many talented young people taking part, and I’m excited to think that even in this first year, the competition has drawn out some really promising and individual musical voices. We asked entrants to take inspiration from their local area in Surrey, and we were all particularly moved by *Matty’s* musical and emotional response to this, evoking the sounds and sights of a place which was for him a ‘great escape’ during the pandemic. I’m really looking forward to giving the first public performance of the work with my fellow Sitkovetsky Trio members at the festival in May, and to keeping an eye on the progress of *Matty* and all our winners over the coming years.’

‘*On Reigate Hill*’ will be premiered by the acclaimed **Sitkovetsky Trio** on **Thursday 5 May** as part of the opening concert of IIMF’s May festival fortnight.

The concert takes place at Vaughan Williams’ former school, **Charterhouse** in Godalming, in the very Hall in which the composer performed and put on concerts during his school days in the late 1880s. The programme also includes music by the young Vaughan Williams, Beethoven and the world premiere of a specially commissioned piano trio by **Natalie Klouda** – herself a young composer with Surrey connections as a former pupil of The Yehudi Menuhin School in Cobham.



Tickets for Thurs 5 May’s performance and all other IIMF 2022 events can be booked at <https://tickets.iimf.co.uk>.

NOTES TO EDITORS

2022 Festival Programme (full brochure available to view [here](#))

Sat 19 March – Memorial Chapel, Charterhouse - Britten Sinfonia, Alexander Sitkovetsky & pupils of Charterhouse

RVW	The Old 100 th
Holst	St Paul Suite
RVW	An Oxford Elegy – narrator: poet & Old Carthusian Lachlan Mackinnon
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RVW/D Matthews	Romance & Pastorale – directed from violin by Alexander Sitkovetsky – WORLD PREMIERE
Tallis	O Nata Lux & Thou Wast O God (unaccompanied)
RVW	Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis

Charterhouse pupils play alongside the musicians of Britten Sinfonia, directed by leader Thomas Gould, in the *St Paul Suite* and *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, and the school’s Chapel Choir performs in *The Old 100th*, *An Oxford Elegy* and Tallis anthems, conducted by Charterhouse’s Director of Music, Mark Shepherd.

With pre-concert reception in Hall including a talk by Head of Academic Music Dr Russell Millard and the rare opportunity to view RVW artefacts from the school’s own archive.

Thurs 5 May – Hall, Charterhouse - Sitkovetsky Trio & Friends

Natalie Klouda Piano Trio No.2 – **WORLD PREMIERE**
RVW String Quartet in C minor (1898)

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Matty Oxtoby On Reigate Hill - Surrey Hills Young Composer Competition winning work – **WORLD PREMIERE**
Beethoven Piano Trio Op.70 No.1 'Ghost'

Fri 6 May – Leith Hill & Christ Church, Coldharbour - Guided Walk & RVW lecture by Richard Wigmore

Sat 7 May – The Menuhin Hall - Modigliani Quartet

RVW 2 movements from Household Music: 3 Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes
Schubert String Quartet No.7 D.94

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Ravel String Quartet in F major Op.35

Weds 11 May – Dorking & St Barnabas Church, Ranmore Common – Guided Walk & Lunchtime Young Artist Concert

Thurs 12 May – The Menuhin Hall - Gary Hoffman, cello & Wu Qian, piano

RVW Six Studies in English Folk Song
Mendelssohn Cello Sonata No.2 in D major Op.58

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RVW/D Matthews Dark Pastoral
Chopin Cello Sonata in G minor Op.65

Sat 14 May – Garden Room at RHS Hilltop, RHS Garden Wisley - Festival Finale: Michael Collins & Friends

Holst Wind Quintet in A flat major Op.14
RVW The Charterhouse Suite

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Beethoven Septet for winds and strings Op.20

(Final schedule may be subject to amendment)

Tickets

Now on sale at <https://tickets.iimf.co.uk>. Full online brochure available [here](#).

About IIMF

Investec International Music Festival has been presenting world-class performances in the Surrey Hills since its founding in 2010 by fellow pianists **Wu Qian** and **Tessa Marchington**. Over that time, it has expanded from a long weekend of chamber recitals, including in its first year Nicola Benedetti (now a Patron of the Festival alongside Dame Sarah Connolly), to a full fortnight, usually in May, encompassing music, walks and talks in beautiful venues throughout this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The festival celebrated its 10th season in 2019 with a return visit from Nicola Benedetti, the **world premiere of Charlotte Bray's Trio Concerto 'Germinate'**, specially commissioned by IIMF for the occasion and performed by the Sitkovetsky Trio and Philharmonia Orchestra with conductor Pierre-André Valade, plus performances by Clare Teal and Tenebrae. Following a Virtual Season in 2020, the festival returned with a full season of live performances in September 2021 including The Tallis Scholars, Jess Gillam, Alexander Sitkovetsky, Paula Chateauneuf, Wu Qian & Juho Pohjonen.

IIMF Charitable Status

IIMF is a registered charity (registered as Surrey Hills International Music Festival and supported in the 2022 season by Investec).

In addition to presenting world-class concerts, IIMF supports the String Scheme which is run by the Royal Grammar School in Guildford and provides free tuition and instruments to local primary school pupils. IIMF has funded the extension of the scheme to Sandfield Primary School and secured additional funding via the Community Foundation for Surrey for a further expansion to Boxgrove Primary School. The Scheme has continued throughout the pandemic, with its staff working tirelessly to provide teaching videos and individual online lessons during lockdowns. The Headteachers report incredibly positive benefits for the children involved in the Scheme each year, building resilience and confidence alongside musicality and, at a time when access to creative activities is so vital for pupils' well-being, the Festival is more committed than ever to supporting this initiative.

The Festival also provides a performance platform for top post-graduate students from leading conservatoires and other promising young musicians, enabling them to gain invaluable experience performing in front of supportive and knowledgeable local audiences.

IIMF would like to thank the Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust for its support this season, its 2022 Festival Core Sponsor Investec, and all its sponsors, Friends and volunteers.

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