

Bideford Music Club Winter 2025 Newsletter

Seasons Greetings!

There is still time to sign up for 3 concerts at a reduced cost of £41.25 or if you need a Christmas present for someone. Please pay by bank transfer to Bideford Music Club Lloyds bank A/C no:50671368 sort code:30-99-50 giving your name as reference. Please also contact Charles Evans (Treasurer) The Ark Hallsannery, Bideford, EX39 5HE Tel: 07800903891 with details so that he can send you the voucher.

Membership cards for subscribing members have been discontinued this year as they often led to delays at the entrance as they had to be duplicated by lists. However, we will gladly supply a receipt for those who would like confirmation of their subscription.

We have started the 2025-26 series of concerts with two exceptionally wonderful concerts. Our opening concert was on Wednesday 1st October when Joel Munday and Julian Trevelyan performed for us.

The advertised "Belle Epoque" theme of the concert certainly lived up to its French promise, not least as the musicians busy schedules meant that they had to rehearse in Paris and come straight to Bideford via Bristol airport, thankfully achieved with only minor delays. Joel, violinist, originally from Devon and Julian pianist, who now lives in France, both in their mid-twenties, already have exceptional pedigrees with impressive performances since their mid-teens. They have now gained coveted recognition from musical trusts as well as fine reputations in the UK and abroad. These were amply demonstrated in the concert.

Their programme of well known French sonatas by Faure, Poulenc and Ravel was enhanced by a sonata by Mel (originally Melanie) Bonis who composed over 300 works, but abbreviated her name, probably rightly suspecting that a female composer might be less well regarded. The performers brought to life all the romantic and melodic passion of the works, ending with the dramatic Poulenc sonata, dedicated to the poet Federico Garcia Lorca, who was shot in the Spanish Civil War, and marked by passionate grief and fury around a movement of sadness.

Pam Thomson

A quick quiz.

1. What subtitle goes with Gilbert & Sullivan's operetta The Pirates of Penzance?
 - a) The Witch's Curse
 - b) The Lass that Loved a Sailor
 - c) The Slave of Duty
 - d) The Peer & the Peri

2. Which composer wrote 2 piano concertos, one violin concerto and one double concerto for violin and cello?
 - a) Beethoven
 - b) Brahms
 - c) Bach
 - d) Bruch
3. In which country was Delibes opera *Lakme* set?
 - a) Sri Lanka
 - b) Myanmar
 - c) India
 - d) Vietnam
4. Which of these vehicles did Herbert von Karajan not appear with on the cover of one of his recordings?
 - a) Aeroplane
 - b) Boat
 - c) Racing car
 - d) Hovercraft
5. How many *Ballades* did Chopin write?
 - a) 4
 - b) 12
 - c) 24
 - d) 48.

Solutions at the end of the newsletter.

Now something a little more serious.

Kasparas Mikužis: the young Lithuanian pianist's performance at the second concert in the **Bideford Music Club's** season, captivated the audience with a programme spanning the classical (Mozart) through the early 20th century (Ravel and Rachmaninov) to contemporary (Marc-Andre Hamelin). Kasparas has performed at some of Europe's most renowned venues, including Wigmore Hall in London and Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; he is justly celebrated for his artistry and versatility.

Mozart's Piano Sonata in C major K330 opened the performance, Kasparas' fingers dancing across arpeggios, bringing subtlety and warmth to the classical structure. This was followed by sections from Miroirs, composed by Ravel for the piano (his own instrument) and we enjoyed further sections later, as encores. Marc-Andre Hamelin's Pavane variée brought the first half to a close. Kasparas explained to the audience the composer's own view that the public can be receptive to works of any period -- and while the writing of the Pavane is modern it is rooted in the traditional and blends with romantic elements. Resounding applause showed the appreciation of the audience.



The concert closed with Rachmaninov's Piano Sonata Number 1 in D minor. First composed in 1907, it combines thematic economy with powerful expression and following revisions was finalised in 1908. Originally it was intended to be programmed on Goethe's *Faust* and,

while that was abandoned, the three movements might suggest Faust, Gretchen and Mephistopheles. A long piece it remains one of the least performed of Rachmaninov's works and we were fortunate to hear it.

This sonata is classical in structure, with fast movements surrounding a slower, more tender second movement. The movements feature broad themes and ambitious climaxes. Rachmaninov is known to have had a very wide hand-span, well able to play huge chords to dramatic effect. Kasparas accomplished these with consummate ease.

The audience left the concert with heads humming phrases, some from works that were familiar and well-loved, and some from inspirational and intriguing more recent works.

Barbara Hilton

The season continues on Sunday 11th. January 2026 at 3.00 pm. with the MZ Duo, saxophone and accordion, they will play works by Grieg, Ravel, Piazzolla, Sweeney, Bach and Bartok.

The concert on Sunday 1st. February 2026 at 3.00pm will showcase Arie Dakesian, a Lebanese -Armenian guitarist, who is supported by the Tillett Trust. We have a lot to look forward to!

A quote from Sir Thomas Beecham. "There are two golden rules for an orchestra: start together and finish together. The public doesn't give a damn hat goes on in between!"

Other events:

On Saturday 10th. January 2026 at 4.00pm, MZ Duo saxophone and accordion, have agreed to do an extra concert at the Burton Gallery in Bideford. The programme will be completely different from their Sunday concert and will be based around the artwork and musical interests of Joan Miro, in conjunction with the Burton's Miro exhibition. The programme includes works by Spanish/Catalan composers, selections from Dave Brubeck's Miro-inspired Time Further Out, works by contemporary composers, and improvisations from the duo based on Miro's artwork. This will be a welcome collaboration between Bideford Music Club and the Burton and Burton Friends. Please book soon for the Saturday concert, as space is limited. Send your firm booking to: contact @friendsof theburton.co.uk. You can pay in advance by BACS (£10 per person or £8 for music club members and Friends of the Burton) to the account of Friends of the Burton Art Gallery. Sort code:30-54-66. Account no: 12241260, with your name and CONCERT as reference. Or, if you have booked, you can pay at the door on the day.

Solutions to the quiz.

1. a) The Slave of Duty
2. b) Brahms
3. c) India
4. d) Hovercraft
5. a) 4