Sevenoaks Music Club

Main Hall, Walthamstow Hall School
Saturday 21st November 2026 – 7.30 pm

Connaught Brass



Jean-Philippe Rameau: Overture from Dardanus
André Lafosse: Suite Impromptu
Ravel: Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn
Debussy arr. Tweed: Suite Bergamasque
Astor Piazzolla arr. Verhelst: Suite from Maria de Buenos Aires
Florence Price arr. Blair: Adoration
Gershwin arr. Gale: Selections from Porgy and Bess

Connaught Brass

“TECHNICALLY ASTONISHING, ECLECTIC IN REPERTOIRE, AND PREPARED TO EXPLODE CLICHES OF WHAT BRASS CHAMBER MUSIC SHOULD SOUND LIKE” - THE ARTS DESK

Winners of the Inaugural Philip Jones International Brass Ensemble Competition and the Royal Overseas League Competition, Connaught Brass seek to redefine how brass chamber music is perceived. Blending a deep respect for the genre’s heritage with a fresh, youthful perspective, their performances are not only marked by vibrance and boldness, but with warmth and approachability, reflecting the strong camaraderie at the heart of the ensemble. Through brand-new commissions, audience-favourite arrangements and a commitment to originality, Connaught Brass breathe new life into tradition, offering an engaging concert experience with the ultimate goal of bringing brass chamber music to the forefront of today’s musical world.

The Connaughts have shared their music-making widely across the UK and Europe at venues including Wigmore Hall, the Barbican Centre, the Lucerne Festival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, De Doelen Rotterdam, De Bijloke Ghent, Societá Filarmonica Trento, Snape Maltings, Kings Place, St George’s Bristol and Hidden Doors Arts Festival Edinburgh. Additional highlights include performing live on radio from the Concertgebouw’s Spiegelzaal, appearing as regular guests on BBC Radio 3’s In Tune programme and being featured on Classic FM’s Christmas Day programme live from St Paul’s Knightsbridge since 2024.

Following international debuts in Norway, Belgium and Germany, the 26/27 season will see the group record their debut album with Delphian Records, give world premiere performances of two newly commissioned major works written especially for the group, continue the run of their audience-favourite Christmas programme following its 2024 premiere at the Barbican Centre, alongside an extensive UK and Ireland schedule at venues including Saffron Hall, St George's Bristol, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Royal Irish Academy of Music.

The individual members of Connaught Brass are:

Aaron Akugbo – trumpet
Cameron Chin-See – trumpet
Zoë Tweed – horn
Chris Brewster – trombone
Aled Meredith-Barrett – tuba

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Overture from *Dardanus*

Dardanus was an opera of 1739, whose early performances did not meet with critical approval, mainly on grounds of dramatic weakness, and it was only after substantial rewriting that, in 1760, it was acclaimed as one of Rameau's greatest works. The convoluted plot, involving ancient Greek legend, kings, a magician, a love story and a monstrous dragon, need not concern us here, as we will hear only the Overture, containing all the best tunes. The original was of course scored for full 18th-century orchestra.

André Lafosse (1890-1975)

Suite Impromptu

Epithalame
Marche
Elégie
Mouvement

Lafosse was Professor of Trombone at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1948 to 1960. This Suite for brass quintet has been acclaimed as one of the finest written for these forces, exploiting the various timbres of the individual instruments.

Epithalame (a bridal song), marked *moderato e un poco rubato*, is a melodious waltz-like movement. *Marche*, marked *allegro risoluto*, is cheerful and quick. *Elégie*, marked *adagio ma non troppo*, is a heartfelt lament building to a sonorous climax. *Mouvement*, marked *vivo*, is a bright and breezy rapidly-moving conclusion.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn

This brief item is an arrangement for brass of a piano piece written in 1909 to commemorate the centenary of Haydn's death. Ravel used the letters H (= B natural), A, Y (= D), D, N (=G) as his motif.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Suite Bergamasque

Prélude
Menuet
Clair de lune
Passepied

This Suite for piano was originally composed in 1890 but not published until Debussy had established his reputation, in 1905; it appears that he made substantial revisions at that stage. The ‘bergamasque’ is a rustic dance from Bergamo, mentioned in the poem by Paul Verlaine which gave the third movement its title; that movement must now be one of the most famous pieces ever. The arrangement for brass quintet is by Zoë Tweed.

INTERVAL

Astor Piazzolla (1921-92)

Suite from *Maria de Buenos Aires*

In 1968 Piazzolla, the Argentine composer of tango music, wrote a ‘tango opera’, i.e. a short opera using set dance pieces. The somewhat bizarre plot concerns Maria, a girl driven to becoming a sex worker in Buenos Aires; she is killed, and then her Shadow walks the city, and eventually gives birth to a child Maria, who may be herself. This suite of music from the ‘operita’ was arranged by Steven Verhelst, a prolific composer and arranger for brass, for the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, but he also made tonight’s version for brass quintet.

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Adoration

After a long period of neglect following her death, Price’s music has in recent years been re-evaluated and is increasingly performed. *Adoration* was written for organ in about 1951 and

has subsequently been arranged for many combinations of instruments. This arrangement is by Robyn Blair.

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Selections from *Porgy and Bess*

Gershwin's only major opera was written in 1935 and was initially a commercial failure, perhaps due to the difficulty for the public of deciding whether it was an opera or an ambitious musical. It has since become a classic, of course, and is full of the marvellous tunes represented in this selection, arranged by Jack Gale.

Programme notes by Kevin Grafton

Previously in Sevenoaks

There have been six concerts by brass quintet or ensemble over the years, most recently by the Fine Arts Brass Ensemble in 2002. *Suite Bergamasque* has been played twice in its original version for solo piano and twice in arrangements involving a harp. All the other pieces in tonight's programme are making their first appearance at the Club.

Forthcoming Local Arts Events

Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra Bohemian Rhapsodies: Weinberger, Dvorak, Smetana, Martinu **Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LU**	Sunday, 29 November 2026, 3pm https://rtwso.org/
Tonbridge Music Club **The Ben Cox Band** A relaxed evening of jazz **Juddians Rugby Club, Tonbridge**	Friday, 4 December 2026, 7pm https://tmc.org.uk/
The Arts Society Sevenoaks Who is Santa Claus? **Walthamstow Hall Senior School, Hollybush Lane, Sevenoaks**	Friday, 11 December 2026, 7.30pm https://theartssocietysevenoaks.org.uk/
The Arts Society Knole Christmas and other festivals in modern Mexico **Bat and Ball Centre, Cramptons Road, TN14 5DN**	Thursday 17 December, 2pm https://theartssociety.org/knole
Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra Stravinsky, Arutiunian, Shostakovich **Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks**	Sunday 14 March 2027, 3pm https://www.sevenoakssymphonyorchestra.org.uk/

Please check the details before setting out for any of these event

Sevenoaks Music Club
2026-27



Sunday 13 December 2026 – 3pm
Young Musicians Concert
Rinchen Posel (piano)
Beethoven, Rachmaninov, Ravel
Kiki Skinner (cello)
Bach, Ligeti, Schubert, Beach



Saturday 23 January 2027 – 7.30pm
Emma Stratton (Piano)
Beethoven, Gubaidulina, Schumann, Liszt



Saturday 20 February 2027 – 7.30pm
Gerard Flotats (Cello)
Fauré, Beethoven, Stravinsky, Mendelssohn



Saturday 20 March 2027 – 7.30pm
Sacconi String Quartet
Mozart Quartet in C, K.465;
Freya Waley-Cohen Hymns and Songs for Friendship (Sacconi commission);
Beethoven Quartet in F, Op.135