

LUNCHTIME RECITAL

THURSDAY 23RD APRIL 2026

RUDDOCK HALL, 13.10

ARAN MURUGANANTHAN – *‘cello*

MICHELLE ZHU – *piano*

MARK BO – *violin*

ESMEE RAGHAVAN – *‘cello*

PIANO ACCOMPANIST: KATE THOMPSON, LUCY AKEHURST,
MICHELLE SANDERS

Elegy

KENNETH LEIGHTON

Piano Sonata no. 23 in F minor, op.57 **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**
i. Allegro assai

Scène de Ballet, Op.100 **CHALES-AUGUSTE DE BÉRIOT**

5 pieces on Georgian Folk Songs **SULKHAN TSINTSADE**
for Cello and Piano
i. Urmuli (improvisatory/wagon song)

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988): *Elegy* (1949)

Born on 2 October 1929 in Wakefield, Yorkshire, Kenneth Leighton was a distinguished British composer and pianist known for his expressive choral, orchestral, and chamber works. Over his career, he produced more than 100 published works, including symphonies, concertos, masses, and an opera, *St Columba*, showing his diverse range of composing in which his style of British tradition is blended with more modern influences. His *Elegy* for cello was originally part of a Sonata in F minor, written by a young Leighton in 1949. It was the second movement, the *Lento Cantabile*, but Leighton discarded this Sonata and decided to publish the *Elegy* separately in 1953.

Aran Murugananthan, Fourths

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827):

Piano Sonata no. 23 in F minor, op. 57 'Appassionata' (1804-1805)

i. Allegro assai

Ludwig van Beethoven was a German pianist and composer, widely regarded as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western Classical music. His musical style was pivotal in shaping the transition from the Classical period to the Romantic period. Beethoven composed a wide range of works, including symphonies, piano sonatas (of which he wrote 32), chamber music, concertos, masses, lieder, an opera, variations, overtures and incidental music, as well as smaller piano pieces, such as the Bagatelles.

The Piano Sonata no. 23 in F minor, colloquially known as the 'Appassionata', is considered one of Beethoven's greatest and most technically challenging piano sonatas. It was written during Beethoven's middle "Heroic" period, in which his works were characterised by struggle and heroism. During this time, Beethoven's hearing was rapidly deteriorating; this sonata is often seen as a profound expression of his inner turmoil and an act of defiance against his increasing deafness.

The first movement is in sonata form. It opens with a quiet, ominous theme, built from a down-and-up arpeggio in dotted rhythm. It settles briefly on the dominant before immediately being repeated a semitone higher (in G flat), creating a sense of tension and instability; this use of the Neapolitan chord (the flattened supertonic) is an important structural feature of the work. From this opening idea, the music quickly intensifies through startling changes in tone, sharp dynamic contrasts and restless rhythmic drive, with a brief lyrical second subject offering only momentary relief. The development further heightens tension by fragmenting earlier material, leading back into the recapitulation and directly into a furious extended coda, which features quasi-improvisational arpeggios spanning most of the early 19th-century piano's range. At the end, the movement fades away into the depths of the piano, leaving the emotional tension lingering.

Michelle Zhu, Upper Fouths

Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802-1870): *Scène de Ballet*, Op.100 (c.1837)

Charles-Auguste de Bériot was a Belgian violinist and composer. Born in 1802, he was one of the defining figures of nineteenth-century violin playing, whilst also being self-taught. He helped create the Franco-Belgian violin school, which was developed further by the great Eugène Ysaÿe. Bériot was one of the most popular Romantic violinists, so during his prime, he toured around Europe bringing wild crowds with him. Eventually he became violinist to the court of King William I and a professor at the Brussels Conservatory. He gradually lost his vision at in later life, and aged 68, he passed away due to declining health in old age.

Scène de Ballet is one of his most famous works, and was written as a concert piece for violin and orchestra. The piece is a concert fantasy inspired by ballet music. It starts off with a slow melodic introduction, followed by faster dance-like ideas filled with expressive, theatrical, and “dance-like” themes, then ending with a brilliant conclusion.

Mark Bo, Divisions

Sulkhan Tsintsade (1925-1991):

5 pieces on Georgian Folk Songs for Cello and Piano (1950)

i. *Urmuli (improvisatory/wagon song)*

Sulkhan Tsintsadze, a Georgian cellist and composer, wrote this set of pieces in 1950, drawing directly on the folk melodies he grew up with during his childhood. The first movement is based on an *orovela*, a traditional Georgian ploughman’s song. The opening is calm and reflective, built from long, vocal lines that imitate the way these songs were originally sung across open fields. The piano provides a steady, grounded accompaniment while the cello carries the melody with a simple, expressive character.

Esmee Raghavan, Lower Fifths

ARAN MURUGANANTHAN is 15 years old and started studying the cello when he was 6 years old with Emma Barron, who continues to teach him currently. He passed his Grade 8 in 2023 with distinction and is preparing for his Diploma, scheduled for this summer. He also plays both the saxophone and the piano and is planning to sit his diploma and Grade 8 respectively this summer. Outside of music, Aran enjoys road cycling and playing hockey in his free time.

MICHELLE ZHU is in Upper Fourth and she studies piano and violin. She achieved her licentiate diploma in piano in 2025 and made her concerto debut in Thirds. On the violin, Michelle participated in the National programme of the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain (NCO) in U12 and U14 and was principal desk both times. She has also been a member of the English Symphony Orchestra (ESO) Youth and NYO Inspire. Michelle also loves fundraising for charity through music and has done so since the age of 6. Apart from music, Michelle's hobbies include competitive swimming, vocational ballet and chess.

MARK BO is 16 and has played the violin with Lucy Akehurst since a ripe young age of 6. He completed his grade 8 in 2021. From the age of 7, he also studied the piano under the guidance of Dr. Fang and completed his grade 8 with a distinction. Currently, he is studying for his A levels: Math, Further Maths, Physics, and Chemistry. In his spare time, he embraces his inner wild side and enjoys climbing plastic rocks at Depot bouldering gym.

ESMEE RAGHAVAN has been playing the cello for nine years, beginning their musical journey at primary school before progressing beyond the classroom as their abilities developed. They currently study at Birmingham Junior Conservatoire under Elaine Ackers and are playing at a post-Grade 8 level. Alongside their cello studies, Esmee has played the piano since the age of five and has also reached post-Grade 8 standard there, studying with Salome Chitaia. More recently, they expanded their instrumental studies by taking up the oboe and have recently completed their Grade 7 under Laura Ashton at Birmingham Junior Conservatoire.

They have performed with the National Children's Orchestra, both in the Under-13s Orchestra and Main Orchestra, and have also played with the National Youth String Orchestra, NYO Inspire, and the English Symphony Orchestra. They were invited to attend Cadenza, a summer course run by John Thwaites, Head of Keyboard Studies at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where they were tutored by renowned cellists including Laura van der Heijden. Beyond performance, Esmee also enjoys composition and other creative activities, such as art. Looking ahead, they hope to audition for the National Youth Orchestra and continue developing as a musician.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM

Tuesday 9 June 2026, 18.00 | Ruddock Hall | Admission free.

A short concert of solo performances and chamber music given by advanced musicians from both schools.

LUNCHTIME RECITAL

Thursday 18 June 2026, 13.10 | Ruddock Hall | Admission free.

Josh, 'cello; Aidan, piano; Siyao and Siyuan, viola duet; *String Quartet*: Li, violin; Clarice, violin; Siyuan, viola; Esmee, 'cello

SUMMER JAZZ CONCERT

Sunday 21 June 2026, 16.30 | Ruddock Hall | £10.00 adults, £5.00 conc.

The KES/KEHS Big Band hosts another summer's evening of jazz, featuring soloists from both schools and professional guest musicians.

Tickets available to parents and members of the school community from Thursday 4 June 2026; on general sale from Thursday 11 June 2026.

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM

Tuesday 23 June 2026, 18.00 | Ruddock Hall | Admission free.

A short concert of solo performances and chamber music given by advanced musicians from both schools.

STEINWAY JAZZ NIGHT 2

Monday 29 June 2026, 17.00 | Ruddock Hall | £5.00 adults, £2.50 conc.

A concert of solo and group jazz performances given by musicians from both schools.

Tickets available from Thursday 18 June 2026

SYNDICATE CONCERT

Friday 3 July 2026, 19.00 | Ruddock Hall

A concert devised and performed by members of the sixth forms from both schools.

For information on these and other concerts, visit **www.ruddockpac.co.uk**.
If you have a query or need to book an accessible space, please contact the Box Office
by email: **ruddockpac@keschools.org.uk**.