St John's Church, Harrow
Thursday July 23rd 2026, 12.30pm

'To absent friends'

Steve Law piano

harrowsummermusic.co.uk

Steve Law is a composer, arranger and pianist originally from Ruislip, who now lives with his wife Lorna in East Sussex. He studied music at Bristol University under Raymond Warren and received a Masters degree in composition for his opera *Heaven On Earth*.

Steve writes music in a popular melodic style that fuses classical, jazz and pop influences. His *Piano Concerto* was released by Navona in 2023 on *Symphonic Chronicles Vol.1*.with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and pianist Joseph Havlat conducted by David Watkin. It received an Oppenheim John Memorial Trust award and a *BBC Music Magazine* 4 star review, being described as 'a likeable collection of modern, robustly tonal orchestral music.'

Steve's *Violin Concerto* was premiered in 2017 in Scotland by violinist Mark Wilson and conductor Paul Wood. *3 Poems by Lorna Law* were performed at *Harrow Summer Music* in 2018 by Ferrier award winning baritone Gareth Brynmor John with Steve at the piano.

Musicweb International described Steve's first CD of piano music as 'kaleidoscopically varied works…engagement with melody, impressionistic… jazzy syncopation….slowly burning passion'.

Steve is also known as an accurate transcriber of piano music from recordings. His arrangements of Dudley Moore's album *Songs Without Words* are published by Faber. Steve has edited a new volume of the *Gershwin Critical Edition* (to be published this winter) overseen by *The Gershwin Initiative* at the University of Michigan. It contains his meticulous new transcriptions of all the known recordings of song improvisations by George Gershwin on his own music from 78s, films and radio broadcasts made in the 1920s and 30s.

Some of Steve's arrangements of Fats Waller, Russ Conway, Elton John, Billy Taylor etc. can be purchased online at *Sheet Music Direct* along with some of his compositions.

Steve has often performed his own music alongside favourite composers like Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Debussy and Prokofiev. He has a long association with Scott Joplin, Gershwin and Billy Mayerl. In 2012-13 Steve performed unique tribute concerts, starting at St James's Piccadilly, recreating the music and jazz of Dudley Moore. Dudley invited Steve to meet him in London in 1999. Steve co-founded *Harrow Summer Music* in 2014 with composer-pianist Neil Crossland.

CDs by Steve Law will be on sale at the concert priced £10 (Symphonic Chronicles Vol. 1 £20).

stevelawcomposer.com

Programme

In memory of Peter Baxter-Ludlow
and Julian Ashley

Handel	*Minuet in G minor* (1733, arr. Kempff 1954)
Granados	*Danzas Española No.2* (1888-90)
Satie	*Le Fils des étoiles No.1* (1891)
	Gnossienne No.5 (1889)
Zez Confrey	*Oriental Fantasy* (1926)
Joseph F. Lamb	*Ragtime Nightingale* (1915)
Debussy	*La fille aux cheveux de lin* (1909-10) *(from Preludes Book 1)*
	Reflets dans l'eau *(from Images Book 1)*(1905)
Max Morath	*The Golden Hours* (1966)
Zez Confrey	*Midsummer's Nightmare* (1936)
Billy Mayerl	*Shallow Waters* (1936)
Steve Law	*Wuthering Heights Fantasy (Part 1)* (2026)

Contributions to the collection for the musicians are gratefully appreciated.

Please ensure your mobile phone is switched off.

Today's programme is dedicated to two good friends who were well known and loved at St John's Church - Peter Baxter-Ludlow and Julian Ashley – who very sadly passed not long after my previous concert last September. I knew Peter for the best part of thirty years and Julian for over ten. Both were music lovers, supporters and contributors to the life of St John's Greenhill.

The first piece is Handel's famously expressive minuet from Wilhelm Kempff's arrangement of Keyboard Suite in G minor (HWV 439).

Twelve Spanish Dances by Spanish composer Granados were probably written between 1888 and 1890. The second, "Oriental" is flowing and melancholic.

Erik Satie wrote his incidental music *The Son of the Stars* to accompany a three-act poetic drama by Joséphin Péladan. It's minimalist approach and dissonant harmonies sound ahead of its time. The enigmatic yet nonchalant *Gnossienne No.5* was the first of the set to be composed.

Classically trained American composer Zez Confrey is best known for pioneering the popular novelty piano style in the 1920s with hits like *Kitten on the Keys* in 1921. He also wrote more serious and impressionistic pieces like the *Oriental Fantasy*. The oddly titled *Midsummer's Nightmare* (1936) alternates sections of playfulness and tension.

Joseph F. Lamb was an American composer of Irish descent who was considered one of the 'Big Three' of ragtime alongside Scott Joplin and James Scott. The influence of romantic piano music (notably Chopin's 'Revolutionary' study - which his sister played) is strong.

Debussy's wistful *Girl with the Flaxen Hair* was a favourite piece of Peter.

Debussy wrote *Reflections in the Water* as the first of three *Images* (in two sets). There is an ethereal calm at the start before shimmering impressions of light - obviously suggesting an influence of Monet's oils paintings of *Water Lillies* dating from the late 1890s.

Julian was fond of Billy Mayerl – the English composer of syncopated impressions and novelty piano. *Shallow Waters* has a warm nostalgic glow and a middle section reminiscent of Grieg's lyric pieces.

Max Morath was an American ragtime pianist, composer, author and performer on American TV in the 1960s before the ragtime revival of the 70s. The poignant *Golden Hours* is a tribute to John Stark, the publisher who brought Scott Joplin's music to public attention. It was included in the 1974 Kenneth MacMillan production *Elite Syncopations* for the Royal Ballet. The sheet music can also be found in the later edition of *They All Played Ragtime* by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis.

The last piece is the opening slow section from my piano piece inspired by the Emily Bronte novel *Wuthering Heights* published in 1847. It is an impression of the brooding emotion and terrain of the Yorkshire Moors rather than an attempt to tell any part of the story.

Thank you to Simon Patrick, my wife Lorna and all those who have helped today.