Jim Abbott, an alumnus of Ashdown House, plays two pieces of the Baroque era. Bach’s inventions were originally written for the harpsichord as a method of learning to cleanly play in two parts and develop a cantabile style of playing and a sense of composition, amongst other purposes. Despite their study intent they are most beautiful pieces for performance as well. The Menuet BWV Anhang 116 is often attributed to Bach since it was found in his notebook for Anna Magdalena, his second wife; however, this notebook can be likened to a musical scrapbook and it is likely that he may not have actually been the composer of this work, among others in the notebook. Nevertheless, it is a popular, animated melody you may have well heard before.

Improvisation

David Dalrymple, Piano

David Dalrymple, a resident of Ashdown House, demonstrates his improvisational skills on the piano, an instrument he entirely learned on his own without lessons or the use of sheet music.

Contrapunctus I, Die Kunst der Fuge BWV 1080

Dheera Venkatraman, Piano

Bach’s last work, known in English as The Art of the Fugue, is a set of variations of a fugue on a very simple theme, usually played on an organ. This first Counterpoint from the work contains four distinct voices to be played simultaneously with two hands; you will hear each of the voices enter successively at the beginning of the piece as is typical of a fugue. Chopin’s Etude Op. 10 No. 5 is one of his most well-known etudes and frequently goes by the nickname of the Black Key Etude because the right hand part strikes only a single white key through the entire piece.

Lift Thine Eyes from Elijah Op. 70

F. Mendelssohn

David Dalrymple, Vocal
Siân Kleindienst, Vocal
Wingho Ko, Vocal
Karen Lee, Vocal

Mendelssohn composed Elijah in 1846, in remembrance of two of his most favourite composers, Bach and Handel. This oratorio, typically requiring four vocalists and an orchestra for the full set of works, was originally written in German, although Mendelssohn himself had it translated to English as well. Lift Thine Eyes is number 28 in the oratorio. David, Karen and Siân are current residents of Ashdown House and Wingho is a current graduate student as well.

1979

Cherub Rock

Smashing Pumpkins

Ethan Fenn, Bass
Dennis Mua, Drums
Robert Toscano, Guitar & Vocal

Robert is a current resident of Ashdown House and took up the guitar after beginning college. He and his friends play two pieces from Smashing Pumpkins, whose music he loves.

Widmung (Liebslied), transcribed after Schumann

F. Liszt

Johann Strauss II

Arabesque on An der schönen, blauen Donau

Piano transcription by A. Schulz-Evler

Joey Zhou, Piano

Widmung, meaning Dedication, was one of a multitude of songs composed by Schumann in 1840, the year he married Clara Wieck. Liszt transcribed the work for piano eight years later, much embellishing the piece in the process. The Blue Danube waltz by Strauss is perhaps one of the most commonly-recognised tunes of classical music and a cultural icon of Austria. Adolf Schulz-Evler, despite composing so few pieces in his lifetime, is most well-known for his transcription of this orchestral waltz for the piano, complete with complex embellishments. The action rarely pauses and the piece ends so rapidly that the listener may wonder why the music has stopped.