

# ETCETERA

## Festival to raise the roof of Muswell Hill's churches

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**A brand new music event takes place in North London's churches next month, bringing quality classical concerts to Muswell Hill.**

Founded by local soprano Hannah King and composer Owain Park, the Muswell Hill Music Festival features nine concerts over six days including chamber, choral, jazz, and a come and sing event.

Works by Bach, Mozart, Britten, Mahler, Liszt, and Highgate-raised John Tavener will be heard in St Michael's Highgate, Holy Innocents Hornsey, and St Andrew's in Alexandra Park.

A free concert at Muswell Hill Baptist Church will be followed by a collection to raise money for the soup kitchen which is based there.

King said: "Since we moved here a few years ago we have been

captivated by the sense of community and amazed at the amount of artistic talent in the area. We have put together a programme that includes a range of styles in the hope that there will be something for everyone."

Park said while there were other classical festivals, they wanted to put on something local to them.

"There is so much going on from the Highgate Festival to St Jude's Proms, we thought 'let's branch out and do something in Muswell Hill to draw in people from the neighbourhood'. We've had a lovely time here, there's something about not having a tube station that makes for a good community."

Park and King put out the call to their many musician friends and put together the programme with their help.

"It's worked out quite well and we already have more people who want to take part if we do it again. This is the first one and it would be lovely to have as much support



The Gesualdo Six and Helen Charlston both perform at the Muswell Hill Music Festival

Pictures: JULIA HOLLAND/BEN MCKIE

and feedback as possible so we can take it further next year."

The couple promise an informal atmosphere with a warm welcome, reasonable ticket prices, refreshments and the chance to talk to performers afterwards.

"It's nice for audiences be able to ask questions, like 'why did you perform that piece?' or 'how do you make that high note?' Because the performers are younger we hope it will bring in younger audiences. Under 18s are free so bring the kids."

Robert Puzey of the Max Bruch Trio said: "We are delighted to be

taking part in the inaugural Muswell Hill Music Festival, this especially resonates as two of us have loved living in North London for many years and are pleased to be involved with a local event."

Helen Charlston winner of the 2018 Handel Singing Competition also performs, and on July 13 there is a pre-concert talk by conductor and choral composer John Rutter - who attended Highgate School with Tavener - before the Cambridge Chorale perform his *The Passing of The Year*.

The festival runs July 8-13  
[mhmusicfest.co.uk](http://mhmusicfest.co.uk)



### Theatre

#### CASH COW

##### HAMPSTEAD THEATRE DOWNSTAIRS

★★★☆☆

**Well timed for Wimbledon, Oli Forsyth's probing new play asks what it takes to make a champion - by focusing on the pushy parents of a prodigy.**

Construction worker Ade and carer Nina support their tennis-playing daughter's potential, but soon shed friends, relatives, home, jobs, and any identity outside of their offspring.

They become backseat coaches and managers, expecting a literal return on their investment.

Forsyth's time-hopping play shows the build-up of a career and its grim aftermath.

With numerous short scenes, it's an involving 90-minute two-hander - sometimes resembling a tennis match in its zippy back and forth.

However, we can fill in gaps between the two timelines, making several scenes



Phoebe Pryce and Jonathan Livingstone in *Cash Cow* at Hampstead Theatre downstairs

Picture: ROBERT DAY

unnecessary, and big revelations need longer to unpack - especially an abusive coach, and the warped logic that leads to

lawsuits and tabloid tell-alls.

It would also have been interesting to further examine the class element of this elitist

sport (the financial burden is enormous), and the specific experience of a female athlete.

Jonathan Livingstone and

Phoebe Pryce effectively convey the duo's murky motives - encouraging and self-sacrificing, yet mercenary and ruthless - as well as representing the daughter they've subsumed, who responds in listless monosyllables.

There's no evidence she has the burning passion or tough mentality that makes a pro athlete, but the competitive drive is clear in her coercive parents.

And yet, if she'd succeeded, would it all have been worth it - in every sense?

Director Katie Pesskin keeps a tight focus on the couple, creating an uneasy intimacy, while Anna Reid's spare, white line-bordered space nods to a tennis court, and also feels like an inescapable cell.

Andy Murray's mum Judy still has an eye-rolling "pushy mum, allegedly" in her Twitter bio, demonstrating our ongoing fascination with high-achievers' parents.

Forsyth's play is an imperfect but provocative lob in that direction.

Marianka Swain