



**Free concert
programme**

London Philharmonic Orchestra



**2025/26 season
at the
Southbank Centre**



**SOUTHBANK
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London Philharmonic Orchestra

Principal Conductor Edward Gardner supported by Aud Jebsen

Principal Guest Conductor Karina Canellakis supported by Richard Buxton

Conductor Emeritus Vladimir Jurowski **KBE Patron** HRH The Duke of Kent KG

Artistic Director Jesús Herrera **Chief Executive** David Burke

Leader Pieter Schoeman supported by Neil Westreich

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Wednesday 1 April 2026 | 7.30pm

Pictures at an Exhibition

Mark-Anthony Turnage

Three Screaming Popes (15')

Bartók

Violin Concerto No. 1 (21')

Interval (20')

Mussorgsky

Pictures at an Exhibition (30')

Edward Gardner conductor

Generously supported by Aud Jebsen

Alina Ibragimova

violin

The timings shown are not precise and are given only as a guide.

Concert presented by the London Philharmonic Orchestra

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Tonight in 2 minutes

New to classical? Short on time? Your quick guide to tonight's concert.

The vibe

Pictures at an Exhibition

Colour, character, and vivid musical pictures. We begin with contemporary British composer Mark-Anthony Turnage's punchy *Three Screaming Popes*. Then our soloist, Alina Ibragimova, joins the stage to perform Bartók's First Violin Concerto – a musical portrait of a young woman with whom the composer was in love. After the interval, Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* brings an imaginary art gallery vividly to life.

Who's on stage?



Edward Gardner – conductor

Ed is the LPO's Principal Conductor and works closely with the Orchestra all year round, so our musicians know him well and enjoy a special connection and rapport with him. One of the leading British conductors of his generation,

Ed is highly regarded for his work in opera as well as with orchestras. From 2007–15 he was the Principal Conductor of English National Opera, and he always brings a strong sense of drama and storytelling to his LPO concerts.



Alina Ibragimova – violin

British-Russian violinist Alina Ibragimova is admired for the clarity and intensity of her playing. She's performed around the world and won numerous awards for her performances. Alina is particularly known for her interpretations of

20th-century pieces like tonight's work – Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 1 – drawing us straight into the music's drama and lyricism.

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Tonight there are almost 100 LPO musicians on stage.

Our talented members represent over 14 different nationalities, and many enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral roles.

Turn to page 6 to see a full player list.

What to expect

Take your seats...

The Orchestra tune up their instruments, then the conductor, Ed, enters the stage. Once the applause dies down, sit back and enjoy the music ...



15 min

Mark-Anthony Turnage *Three Screaming Popes*

Inspired by a series of paintings by the 20th-century artist Francis Bacon (which themselves drew on portraits by 17th-century painter Velázquez), *Three Screaming Popes* transforms these distorted figures into a vivid orchestral canvas.



21 min

Béla Bartók *Violin Concerto No. 1* with soloist Alina Ibragimova

A concerto is a showpiece for a solo instrument accompanied by the orchestra. Bartók, one of Hungary's greatest composers, wrote this as a musical portrait of a brilliant violinist called Stefi Geyer, reflecting both her charm and wit. Its two movements are played without a break.

Longer classical pieces are often made up of **movements**, or shorter sections. Applause is usually saved for after the final movement.

Maybe an **encore!** The soloist might play a little extra surprise piece, if the applause is loud enough!

Interval 20 min



30 min

Modest Mussorgsky *Pictures at an Exhibition*

This piece was inspired by the paintings of Mussorgsky's friend Victor Hartmann. It's made up of 15 movements – but most of them are very short! Each represents a different painting, as if we're strolling round a gallery – from the grotesque Gnome and the haunting Old Castle, through the noisy children of Tuileries and the squawking Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks, to the triumph of The Great Gate of Kiev.

After the final piece, we applaud the performers. The conductor will acknowledge the Leader (chief First Violin), Pieter, and might highlight other players for particular appreciation and applause, with several bows bringing the evening to a celebratory close.

Want to read more? Turn to page 9 for a deeper dive into this evening's pieces.

Welcome

Welcome to the Southbank Centre

We're the UK's largest centre for the arts and one of the nation's top five visitor attractions, showcasing the world's most exciting artists at our venues in the heart of London. As a charity, we bring millions of people together by opening up the unique art spaces that we care for.

The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, National Poetry Library and Arts Council Collection. We're one of London's favourite meeting spots, with lots of free events and places to relax, eat and shop next to the Thames.

We hope you enjoy your visit. If you need any information or help, please ask a member of staff. You can also email hello@southbankcentre.co.uk or write to us at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX.

Subscribers to our email updates are the first to hear about new events, offers and competitions. Just head to our website to sign up.

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LPO news

After Dark with the LPO

Our 'After Dark' series is back at the Southbank Centre this spring, bringing relaxed late-night performances to the Queen Elizabeth foyer after selected concerts. These performances are free for main concert ticket-holders, or just £10 if you're joining the fun on its own.

On **Wednesday 15 April**, following Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals* in our main concert, we celebrate the Zoological Society of London's 200th anniversary with a lively 'After Dark' performance by the Orchestra's brass and percussion players. It opens with Walton's *Roaring Fanfare*, written 50 years ago for ZSL's 150th anniversary. The players then embark on a lively sonic safari through Chris Hazell's *The Cats Suite*, before raising a festive final toast with Goff Richards's *Homage to the Noble Grape*.

Book now via lpo.org.uk/whatson

Behind the scenes with LPO Friends

Earlier today, LPO Friends enjoyed exclusive, behind-the-scenes access to a Private Members' Rehearsal with the Orchestra, conductor Edward Gardner and violinist Alina Ibragimova ahead of tonight's concert.

If you'd like to see for yourself what goes into putting on an LPO concert – plus enjoy a host of other amazing benefits, like a private bar space and meeting our musicians – join our family of LPO Friends today, from just £6 per month!

Our new 2026/27 concert season will be announced on **Tuesday 21 April**. LPO Friends receive our new season brochure ahead of the general public, and priority booking for Friends will open on Wednesday 22 April, before general booking from Tuesday 28 April.

Interested in finding out more? Scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/friends



London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Jason Bell

Uniquely groundbreaking and exhilarating to watch and hear, the London Philharmonic Orchestra has been celebrated as one of the world's great orchestras since Sir Thomas Beecham founded it in 1932. Our mission is to create unrivalled orchestral experiences on stage and cultivate human connections beyond it, which we accomplish through live performances, online, and an extensive education and community programme, cementing our position as a leading orchestra for the 21st century.

Our home is at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, where we're at the beating heart of London's cultural life. You'll also find us at our resident venues in Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden, and on tour worldwide. In 2024 we celebrated 60 years as Resident Symphony Orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, combining the magic of opera with Glyndebourne's glorious setting in the Sussex countryside.

Soundtrack to key moments

Everyone will have heard the Grammy-nominated London Philharmonic Orchestra, whether it's playing the world's National Anthems for every medal ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, our iconic recording with Pavarotti that made *Nessun Dorma* a global football anthem, or closing the flotilla at The Queen's Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. And you'll almost certainly have heard us on the soundtracks for major films including *The Lord of the Rings*.

Sharing the wonder worldwide

We're one of the world's most-streamed orchestras, with over 15 million plays of our content each month. We're the most followed UK orchestra on Instagram, the most followed orchestra globally on TikTok, and overall the third most followed globally across all social platforms. In 2024 we featured in a TV documentary series on Sky Arts: 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra', which was nominated for a 2025 BAFTA. During 2025/26 we're once again working with Marquee TV to broadcast selected live concerts to enjoy at home.

Our conductors

Our Principal Conductors have included great historic names like Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In 2021 Edward Gardner became our 13th Principal Conductor, and Vladimir Jurowski became Conductor Emeritus. Karina Canellakis is our current Principal Guest Conductor, and Sir George Benjamin our Composer-in-Residence.

Next generations

We're committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians and music-lovers: we love seeing the joy of children and families experiencing their first musical moments, and we're passionate about inspiring schools and teachers through dedicated concerts, workshops, resources and training. Reflecting our values of

Pieter Schoeman

Leader

collaboration and inclusivity, our OrchLab and Open Sound Ensemble projects offer music-making opportunities for adults and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

Today's young instrumentalists are the orchestra members of the future, and we have a number of opportunities to support their progression. Our LPO Junior Artists programme leads the way in creating pathways into the profession for young artists from under-represented communities, and our LPO Young Composers and Foyle Future Firsts schemes support the next generation of professional musicians, bridging the transition from education to professional careers. We also recently launched the LPO Conducting Fellowship, supporting the development of outstanding early-career conductors from backgrounds under-represented in the profession.

2025/26 season

This season's theme, *Harmony with Nature*, explores humanity's bond with the natural world through works by Beethoven, Sibelius, Mendelssohn, Elgar and Dvořák; masterpieces of an era that saw nature as a mirror of human emotion. Closer to our own time, we'll hear from composers as diverse as Duke Ellington, John Luther Adams and Anna Thorvaldsdottir, who have all found a source of creative energy in the processes of nature.

Highlights with Principal Conductor Edward Gardner include symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Brahms and Rachmaninov; a pair of concerts spotlighting 20th-century Central European composers; an evening dedicated to Elgar; and a performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* to end the season. We also welcome back Karina Canellakis and Vladimir Jurowski, as well as guest conductors including Robin Ticciati, Kirill Karabits, Mark Elder and Kahchun Wong. Our lineup of soloists this season includes violinists Anne-Sophie Mutter, Alina Ibragimova, James Ehnes and Himari; cellist Nicolas Altstaedt; and pianists Yefim Bronfman, Alexandre Kantorow and Tomoko Mukaiyama. The season features nine world and UK premieres, including Tan Dun's choral 'Ode to Peace' *Nine*, and *A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)* by jazz icon Terence Blanchard.

This season also sees tours to South Korea and across Europe, as well as a wide range of performances and community events in our Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden residencies.



© Benjamin Lalovega

Pieter Schoeman was appointed Leader of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 2008, having previously been Co-Leader since 2002. He is also a Professor of Violin at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance.

Pieter has performed worldwide as a soloist and recitalist in such famous halls as the Amsterdam

Concertgebouw, Moscow's Rachmaninoff Hall, Capella Hall in St Petersburg, Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, and the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall. He has also appeared as Guest Leader with many prestigious orchestras across the world. As a chamber musician, he regularly appears at London's prestigious Wigmore Hall. His chamber music partners have included Anne-Sophie Mutter, Veronika Eberle, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Boris Garlitsky, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Martin Helmchen and Julia Fischer.

Pieter has performed numerous times as a soloist with the LPO. Highlights have included an appearance as both conductor and soloist in Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, the Brahms Double Concerto with Kristina Blaumane, Florence Price's Violin Concerto No. 2, and the Britten Double Concerto with Alexander Zemtsov, which was released on the LPO Label to great critical acclaim.

Pieter's chair in the LPO is generously supported by Neil Westreich.

New video series: 'Humans of the Orchestra'

Scan the QR code to watch our interview with Pieter



On stage tonight

First Violins

Pieter Schoeman* Leader
Chair supported by Neil Westreich
Alice Ivy-Pemberton
Co-Leader
Vesselin Gellev Sub-Leader
Kate Oswin
Chair supported by Eric Tomsett
Lasma Taimina
Chair supported by Irina Gofman &
Mr Rodrik V. G. Cave
Minn Majoe
Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria
Chan
Vera Beumer
Cassandra Hamilton
Martin Höhmann
Katalin Varnagy
Yang Zhang
Sylvain Vasseur
Amanda Smith
Alison Strange
Katherine Waller
Alice Apreda Howell

Second Violins

Emma Oldfield Principal
Claudia Tarrant-Matthews
Coco Inman
Sophie Phillips
Chair supported by Friends of the
Orchestra
Kate Birchall
Nynke Hijlkema
Marie-Anne Mairesse
Joseph Maher
Nancy Elan
Ashley Stevens
Sioni Williams
Emma Crossley
Ricky Gore
Kate Cole

Violas

Jane Atkins Guest Principal
David BaMaung
Martin Wray
Chair supported by David & Bettina
Harden
Katharine Leek
Benedetto Pollani
Lucia Ortiz Sauco
Michelle Bruil
James Heron

Raquel López Bolívar
Shiry Rashkovsky
Kate De Campos
Richard Cookson

Cellos

Kristina Blaumane Principal
Chair supported by Bianca & Stuart
Roden
Henry Shapard Co-Principal
David Dale
Francis Bucknall
Leo Melvin
Tom Roff
Helen Thomas
Colin Alexander
Jane Lindsay
Iain Ward

Double Basses

Kevin Rundell* Principal
Hugh Kluger
George Peniston
Laura Murphy
Chair supported by Ian Ferguson
& Susan Tranter
Charlotte Kerbergian
Lowri Estell
Adam Wynter
Elen Roberts

Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal
Chair supported by Malcolm &
Alison Thwaites
Daniel Shao
Stewart McIlwham*

Piccolo

Stewart McIlwham* Principal
Chair supported by The Thompson
Family Charitable Trust

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal
Alice Munday
Chair supported by David & Yi
Buckley
Ben Marshall

Cor Anglais

Ben Marshall

Clarinets

Benjamin Mellefont* Principal
Chair supported by Sir Nigel
Boardman & Prof. Lynda Gratton
Thomas Watmough
Paul Richards*

E-flat Clarinet

Thomas Watmough Principal
Chair supported by Roger
Greenwood

Bass Clarinet

Paul Richards* Principal

Saxophones

Martin Robertson
Damon Oliver

Bassoons

Jonathan Davies* Principal
Chair supported by Sir Simon
Robey
Helen Storey*
Simon Estell*

Contrabassoon

Simon Estell* Principal

Horns

Annemarie Federle Principal
Chair supported by Victoria
Robey CBE
John Ryan* Principal
Martin Hobbs
Mark Vines Co-Principal
Gareth Mollison
Elise Campbell
Duncan Fuller

Trumpets

Paul Beniston* Principal
Chair supported by the Williams
family in memory of Grenville
Williams
Tom Nielsen* Principal
Anne McAneney*
David Hilton

Trombones

Mark Templeton* Principal
Chair supported by William & Alex
de Winton
David Whitehouse
Ryan Hulme

Bass Trombone

Lyndon Meredith Principal

Euphonium

David Whitehouse

Tuba

Lee Tsarmaklis* Principal
Chair supported by William & Alex
de Winton

Timpani

Simon Carrington* Principal
Chair supported by Victoria
Robey CBE

Percussion

Andrew Barclay* Principal
Chair supported by Gill & Garf
Collins
Karen Hutt Co-Principal
Chair supported by Joe Topley &
Tracey Countryman
Oliver Yates
Jeremy Cornes
Graham Johns

Harps

Rosanna Rolton
Guest Principal
Tomos Xerri

Piano/Electric Piano

Catherine Edwards

Celeste

Catherine Edwards
Philip Moore

**Professor at a London
conservatoire*

Assistant Conductor

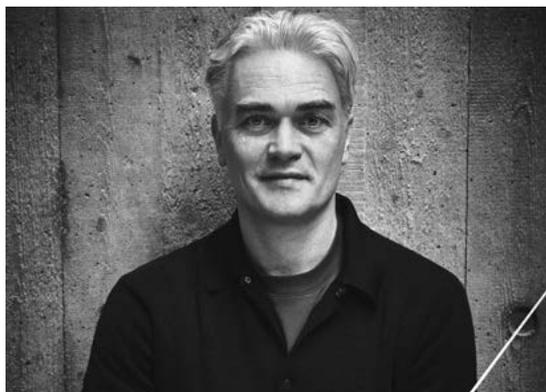
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acknowledges
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An anonymous donor
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Edward Gardner

Principal Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Jason Bell

Edward Gardner has been Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2021. He is also Music Director of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet and Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, following his tenure as Chief Conductor from 2015–24.

In February, Edward conducted two LPO concerts at the Royal Festival Hall spotlighting 20th-century Central European composers. Other highlights this season have included symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Brahms and Rachmaninov, and a semi-staged performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* will end the LPO season on 25 April. In October 2025, he led the Orchestra on a tour of South Korea, and in December a major tour of Germany.

Edward opened his second season as Music Director of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet with *Rusalka* and concert performances of Kurtág's *Fin de partie*. This spring he conducts Verdi's *Don Carlo* and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. June sees concert performances of Wagner's *The Ring Without Words*, and next season the opera house will begin its journey towards a complete *Ring* Cycle in the 2028/29 season.

In demand as a guest conductor, this season Edward returns to orchestras in the USA including the Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony and National Symphony orchestras, and makes his debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. In Europe he conducts the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. In Tokyo he makes his debut with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.

An acclaimed opera conductor, in spring 2025 Edward was re-invited to London's Royal Opera House to conduct the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*, having made his Covent Garden debut with *Káťa Kabanová*. In June 2025 he returned to the Bavarian State Opera for *Rusalka*, following *Peter Grimes* in 2022 and Verdi's *Otello* in 2023. Music Director of English National Opera for eight years (2007–15), he has also built a strong relationship with New York's Metropolitan Opera, and has conducted at La Scala, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera and the Opéra National de Paris.

Edward Gardner has recorded extensively with the Bergen Philharmonic on the Chandos label. Recent releases include symphonies by Brahms and Nielsen, as well as Strauss's *Salome* and a Grammy-nominated Janáček *Glagolitic Mass*. Other recent critically acclaimed releases include *Der fliegende Holländer* with Lise Davidsen, Gerald Finley and the Norwegian National Opera for Decca.

In September 2025, the LPO Label released Gardner's recording of Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir. This marked his third Tippett release for the label, following *The Midsummer Marriage* – winner of a Gramophone Award – and the Second Symphony and Piano Concerto with Steven Osborne. November 2025 saw the release of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, recorded live at the 2022 BBC Proms. Edward's LPO discography also includes works by Berlioz, Rachmaninov, Dvořák, Schumann and Britten. In 2024, he and the Orchestra featured in a BAFTA-nominated Sky Arts TV series: 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra'.

A passionate supporter of young talent, Edward founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra in 2002 and regularly conducts the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has a close relationship with the Juilliard School of Music, and with the Royal Academy of Music.

Born in Gloucester in 1974, Edward was educated at the University of Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music, and gained early recognition as Assistant Conductor of the Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. His many accolades include the Royal Philharmonic Society Conductor of the Year Award (2008), an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera (2009) and an OBE for Services to Music in The Queen's Birthday Honours (2012).

Edward Gardner's position with the LPO is generously supported by Aud Jebsen.

Alina Ibragimova

violin



© Eva Vermandel

Performing music from Baroque to new commissions on both modern and period instruments, Alina Ibragimova is recognised for the 'immediacy and honesty' of her performances (*The Guardian*).

The 2025/26 season sees Alina Ibragimova perform with the Budapest Festival, Montreal Symphony, Vienna Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic orchestras, the Boulez Ensemble and the Kammerakademie Potsdam, working with conductors Iván Fischer, Robin Ticciati, Edward Gardner, Thomas Guggeis and Krzysztof Urbański. She also play-directs the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Camerata Bern.

In March 2025, Alina gave an acclaimed performance of Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 with the LPO at the Royal Festival Hall under Hannu Lintu.

Highlights of the previous two seasons have included concerts with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Detroit Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Bamberg Symphony, WDR Sinfonieorchester and City of Birmingham Symphony, with conductors Vladimir Jurowski, Hannu Lintu, Ryan Bancroft, Maxim Emelyanychev and Anja Bihlmaier.

In recital, Alina regularly performs with pianist Cédric Tiberghien and together they continue their cycle of Beethoven's sonatas for violin and piano on period instruments at Wigmore Hall. Other chamber projects this season include recitals at Berlin's Boulez Saal and

Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw, as well as performances with the Chiaroscuro Quartet, of which Alina is a founding member.

Alina's discography on Hyperion Records ranges from Bach Concertos with Arcangelo through to Prokofiev Sonatas with Steven Osborne. Her 2020 recording of Shostakovich's Violin Concertos won a Gramophone Award, while her 2021 recording of Paganini's *24 Caprices* topped the classical album charts on its release.

Born in Russia in 1985, Alina attended the Moscow Gnesin School, Yehudi Menuhin School and Royal College of Music, studying with Valentina Korolkova, Natasha Boyarsky, Gordan Nikolitch, Christian Tetzlaff, and Adrian Butterfield for Historical Performance. An alumnus of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme, Alina's many accolades include two Royal Philharmonic Society Awards and an MBE in the 2016 New Year Honours List.

Alina performs on a c.1775 Anselmo Bellosio violin, kindly provided by Georg von Opel.

Programme notes

Mark-Anthony Turnage

born 1960

Three Screaming Popes

after Francis Bacon

1988–89



© James Bellorini

Mark-Anthony Turnage is indisputably among the most significant creative figures to have emerged in British music over the last three decades. His first opera, *Greek*, in 1988, established his reputation as an artist who dared to forge his own path between modernism and tradition by means of a unique blend of jazz and classical styles.

His opera *The Silver Tassie* was premiered by English National Opera in 2000, winning both the South Bank Show and the Olivier Awards for Opera. *Anna Nicole* played to sold-out houses at Covent Garden in 2011, while his opera for family audiences, *Coraline*, was staged by The Royal Opera at the Barbican in 2018, travelling on to Freiburg, Lille, Stockholm and Melbourne. His opera *Festen*, based on the Dogme film by Thomas Vinterberg, was premiered to acclaim at the Royal Opera in London in 2025 directed by Richard Jones and conducted by Edward Gardner, and his opera *The Railway Children*, a new adaptation of the much-loved children's classic, was staged by Glyndebourne in autumn 2025.

Turnage was the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Composer-in-Focus during the 2004/05 season, which led to his appointment as Composer-in-Residence from 2005–10. During this time the Orchestra performed many of his works, including the world premieres of the violin concerto *Mambo, Blues and Tarantella* with Christian Tetzlaff and the song-cycle *When I Woke* with baritone Gerald Finlay, both under Vladimir Jurowski. Under Marin Alsop they gave the world premiere of *Yet Another Set To* with trombonist Christian Lindberg and the song-cycle *The Torn Fields*, again with Finlay, as well as the UK premieres of the clarinet concerto *Riffs and Refrains* with Michael Collins, and the orchestral work *Texan Tenebrae*. Three discs of Turnage's music were released on the LPO's own label.

Continues on next page

Programme notes

As well as the LPO, Turnage has spent time as resident composer with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Tonight's work, *Three Screaming Popes*, alongside *Kai*, *Momentum* and *Drowned Out*, were created during his period as Composer-in-Association with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra between 1989 and 1993. *Three Screaming Popes* was commissioned by the Feeney Trust for the CBSO and its then-Principal Conductor Simon Rattle, and was premiered by them on 5 October 1989 at Birmingham's Symphony Hall.

The work took its inspiration from a series of paintings by the 20th-century Irish-born painter Francis Bacon, themselves based on works by 17th-century Spanish painter Diego Velázquez. Mark-Anthony Turnage recalls: 'In 1985 I went to see a stunning exhibition of Francis Bacon's paintings at the Tate Gallery. I was particularly taken with the three Pope paintings, based on *Pope Innocent X* by Velázquez, and my initial idea was to write a piece which distorted a set of Spanish dances as Bacon had distorted and restated the Velázquez. In the process of writing the piece, the dances (like a first layer of paint, or an outline) became so submerged in the other textures of the piece that only a faint trace is visible – just a hint of a tango here and there. What I hope comes across is the colouristic intensity and emotional immediacy of the paintings.'

London Philharmonic Orchestra Turnage on the LPO Label



Vol. 1



Vol. 2



Vol. 3



Three volumes available on CD and all major streaming platforms



Programme notes

Béla Bartók

1881–1945

Violin Concerto No. 1

1907–08

Alina Ibragimova violin

1. *Andante sostenuto* –

2. *Allegro giocoso*



The first of Bartók's two violin concertos was written between July 1907 and February 1908, but was suppressed during the composer's lifetime. It reflects the composer's intense but short-lived love affair with the brilliant and beautiful violinist Stefi Geyer, which took place not long before his marriage to his pupil Márta Ziegler. The first movement was designed as an intimate portrait of 'the idealised Stefi Geyer', while the second was a portrayal of the 'witty and entertaining' side of her character. Only a week after the latter was completed, Geyer ended the relationship. Bartók nevertheless sent her the manuscript of the work, and although she did not play it she kept it until her death in 1956. Meanwhile, Bartók retained a copy, but chose not to put the Concerto forward for performance. However, in 1910 he paired its first movement with a new finale on a related theme for orchestra alone, an expansion of a piano piece, and the following year he published the result as *Two Portraits*, entitled respectively 'Ideal' and 'Grotesque'. The Concerto was not played in its original form until 1958; it was published the following year.

The work, scored for relatively large forces including two harps, shows the young Bartók's growing mastery of the orchestra. As yet, there are few signs of the researches which he had begun during the previous few years into the folk music of rural Hungary. But the two movements, played without a break, correspond broadly to the slow and fast sections of the traditional Hungarian *verbunkos*, or army recruiting dance, as reproduced in Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and Bartók's own works with the title 'Rhapsody'.

Continued overleaf

Programme notes

The 'sustained' first movement is characteristic of the later Bartók in its textures of tautly woven counterpoint. It is based on the melody with which the solo violin opens the work – starting with a series of rising thirds which Bartók told Stefi Geyer constituted her motif – together with the countermelody added by the front desk of first violins. The orchestra unfolds a fugue on the first theme, with the soloist adding a soaring descant; there is a slightly faster orchestral interlude on the second theme; and the soloist returns for a final section based more freely on the first theme, which rises to an urgent orchestral climax but ends calmly.

The 'cheerful' second movement is in classical sonata form, with an athletic first theme and a more relaxed second subject in triplet rhythms. After a predominantly playful and highly virtuosic development section, the first theme returns exuberantly in the orchestra, and the second begins more reflectively than before but reaches a passionate climax. The coda includes a snatch of march tune on the flutes, presented in the score between quotation marks and footnoted with a place name and date, presumably as a souvenir of something Bartók had heard with Stefi in a moment of shared happiness; and there is a last reference back to her motif before the emphatic orchestral ending.

Programme note © Anthony Burton

Interval – 20 minutes

An announcement will be made five minutes before the end of the interval.



The advertisement features the BBC Radio 3 logo at the top left. The central text reads "ADVENTURES IN CLASSICAL" in large, bold, white letters. Below the text, there are two black and white photographs: one of a woman playing a violin and another of a man conducting. At the bottom, it says "Listen on" followed by the Sounds logo.

Programme notes

Modest Mussorgsky

1839–81

Pictures at an Exhibition

1874

orch. Maurice Ravel, 1922

1. *Promenade*
2. *Gnomus*
3. *Promenade*
4. *The Old Castle*
5. *Promenade*
6. *Tuileries*
7. *Bydło*
8. *Promenade* –
9. *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks*
10. *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuĵle*
11. *The Market Place at Limoges*
12. *Catacombæ (Sepulcrum Romanum)* –
13. *Cum mortuis in lingua mortua*
14. *The Hut on Hen's Legs*
15. *The Great Gate of Kiev*

Few composers caused their friends more heartache than the Russian Modest Mussorgsky. To nationalists like the composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and the critic Vladimir Stasov, this brilliant, vivacious, wonderfully individual young man was a force for good in the building of a Russian national style. But keeping his mind on the job was hard. So long as he stayed in focus, Mussorgsky would work quickly: *Pictures at an Exhibition* was written in a magnificent three-week creative spurt in the summer of 1874. But he was easily

distracted – especially if there was vodka to hand. In the end, his drinking killed him: he had just turned 42.

Fine as it was, there were things about *Pictures at an Exhibition* that bothered his friends. Mussorgsky wrote *Pictures* for solo piano – but how suited to the piano was it? Stasov noted at once that there were ideas in it that sounded 'purely orchestral'. After Mussorgsky's death, more and more people began to feel that the music needed to be orchestrated. Various composers

Programme notes

attempted this, but it was only when Maurice Ravel made his orchestral version in 1922 that *Pictures* really stuck in the repertoire. What Ravel achieved here is so effective that some listeners are surprised to discover that *Pictures* was actually written for piano: Ravel's orchestral colours seem to 'belong' to the music.

The 'Exhibition' of the title is an imaginary one, but the pictures are real. Mussorgsky had become a close friend of the painter Victor Hartmann, who also died young. *Pictures at an Exhibition* was written as a memorial to Hartmann, in which Mussorgsky groups together musical impressions of ten of his friend's paintings, linked by a series of five 'Promenades', in which Mussorgsky represents his own thoughts and feelings as he walks around the gallery. After the introductory Promenade comes the first picture, 'Gnomus' – the gnome: a splendidly grotesque portrait, sometimes creepy, with perhaps a hint of tragedy. 'The Old Castle' shows a medieval minstrel singing and playing before an Italian castle. In a sudden flash of inspiration Ravel gave the minstrel's song to a saxophone.



'Tuileries' refers to the famous ornamental gardens in Paris, where children are playing (and quarrelling) noisily. Then comes 'Bydło': two oxen are dragging a wagon along a muddy lane: Ravel's choice of solo tuba for the melody is another masterstroke. 'Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks' is based on a series of costume designs by Hartmann for a show staged in St Petersburg. Ravel's orchestration manages to suggest both glittering sequins and the clucking of the tiny chickens. 'Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle' represents two Jews, one poor and begging piteously, while the other, more prosperous, is sternly dismissive.

'The Market Place at Limoges' depicts gossip travelling like wildfire around a French marketplace. It is suddenly interrupted by stern brass in 'Catacombæ'. From this awe-inspiring scene we move straight into an eerily muted version of the 'Promenade' theme in 'Cum mortuis in lingua mortua' ('With the dead in a dead language'), in which Mussorgsky tries to imagine what his friend might be trying to tell him about the skulls.

'The Hut on Hen's Legs' is the dwelling of the terrifying Russian witch Baba-Yaga, who flies through the air in a gigantic pestle and mortar and eats human bones. Just as her wild ride seems to be reaching its height, it is cut short by the dazzling brass chords of 'The Great Gate of Kiev'. Hartmann's design for a triumphal gateway in the Ukrainian capital city was never realised, so Mussorgsky built it for him in music, and Ravel adds the glittering bell sounds the music so clearly cries out for.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

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Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider



Kristina Blaumane

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony

Wed 8 Apr 2026, 7.30pm

Anna Thorvaldsdottir

CATAMORPHOSIS

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Beethoven Symphony No. 6
(Pastoral)

Kirill Karabits conductor

Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider violin

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6pm | Royal Festival Hall

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Free pre-concert talk with scientist
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Fri 10 Apr 2026, 7.30pm

Dvořák In Nature's Realm

Brahms Double Concerto for violin
and cello

R Schumann Symphony No. 4

Jonathon Heyward conductor

Pieter Schoeman violin*

Kristina Blaumane cello†

*LPO chair supported by Neil Westreich.

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