



**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 Jepsen

Principal Guest Conductor Karina Canellakis supported by Richard Buxton

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Leader Pieter Schoeman supported by Neil Westreich

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Friday 10 April 2026 | 7.30pm

Brahms's Double

Dvořák

In Nature's Realm (11')

Brahms

Double Concerto for violin and cello (31')

Interval (20')

R Schumann

Symphony No. 4 (29')

Jonathon Heyward

conductor

Pieter Schoeman

violin

LPO chair supported by Neil Westreich

Kristina Blaumane

cello

LPO chair supported by Bianca & Stuart Roden

Part of



**Harmony
with Nature**
Music for a sustainable future

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

Brahms's Double

Tonight's programme features three great composers from the 19th-century Romantic era, when music was all about imagination and expression. We begin with Dvořák's overture *In Nature's Realm*, full of tuneful melodies and woodland charm. Brahms's Double Concerto follows, featuring a solo violin and cello in an intimate dialogue with the orchestra. After the interval, Schumann's Fourth Symphony takes us on a dramatic and lyrical musical adventure.

Who's on stage?

Jonathon Heyward – conductor

Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, American conductor Jonathon is our guest conductor tonight. Known for his energy and insight, he brings a fresh and exciting perspective to every performance.



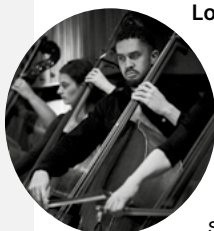
Pieter Schoeman – violin Kristina Blaumane – cello

Pieter and Kristina are both full-time members of the LPO – Pieter is our Leader and Kristina our Principal Cello – so they are used to playing as part of the Orchestra alongside their colleagues. But tonight both of them step into the spotlight as the soloists in Brahms's Double Concerto – a real showcase for their solo talents.



London Philharmonic Orchestra

Tonight there are over 70 LPO musicians on stage. All at the very top of their game, they've studied and practised for years to perfect their craft. Our talented musicians represent over 14 different nationalities, and many enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral roles.



Turn to page 6 for tonight's full player list.

What to expect

Take your seats...

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



11 min

Antonín Dvořák *In Nature's Realm*

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák, writing in the late 19th century, takes us straight into the heart of the natural world in this overture. We'll hear sparkling melodies that suggest flowing streams, rustling forests, and the playful energy of wildlife.



31 min

Johannes Brahms Double Concerto for violin and cello

A concerto usually spotlights a single solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment – but this one features two soloists. The violin and cello engage in an intimate conversation, with moments of fiery brilliance, tender lyricism and Romantic warmth as the soloists and orchestra weave together.

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

Interval 20 min



29 min

Robert Schumann Symphony No. 4

German composer Robert Schumann, one of the great figures of the Romantic era, composed his Fourth Symphony as a seamless journey through four connected movements. Rather than separate sections, the music flows continuously, with each idea leading naturally into the next. We'll hear soaring melodies, dramatic moments and quiet tenderness, together highlighting Schumann's emotional depth and imagination.

After the final piece, we applaud the performers. The conductor will acknowledge tonight's Leader (chief First Violin), Alice, 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 11 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.

Printed with the planet in mind

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LPO news

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 Jonathon Heyward and soloists Pieter and Kristina 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

Future Firsts – Applications open for 2026/27

Our annual Future Firsts programme bridges the transition between education and the professional platform for outstanding early-career orchestral musicians. The year-long programme offers a unique opportunity to play alongside and receive mentorship from LPO musicians, hone your audition technique, and develop the skills needed to be a professional orchestral musician.

We are now welcoming applications for the 2026/27 Future Firsts programme, from UK-based musicians who play an orchestral instrument and who will have completed an undergraduate or postgraduate performance degree by September 2026 (or are at an equivalent playing standard).



Applications close on **6 May 2026**. For more information – including details of the video audition process and the financial support offered (increased since previous years) – scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/futurefirsts

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

Alice Ivy-Pemberton

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.



Alice Ivy-Pemberton joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra as Co-Leader in February 2023.

Praised by *The New York Times* for her 'sweet-toned playing', Alice has performed as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician to international acclaim. While growing up in New York City and studying with Nurit Pacht, Alice made a nationally televised Carnegie Hall debut aged ten, and was a finalist at the Menuhin International Competition at the age of 12.

Alice earned her Bachelors and Masters degrees at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho as a fully-funded recipient of the Kovner Fellowship. During her studies she won Juilliard's Violin Concerto Competition, performed extensively with the New York Philharmonic and The Philadelphia Orchestra, and led orchestras under the baton of Barbara Hannigan, Xian Zhang and Matthias Pintscher. Upon graduating in 2022 she was awarded the Polisi Prize and a Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant in recognition of 'tremendous talent, promise, creativity, and potential to make a significant impact in the performing arts'.

An avid chamber musician, Alice has collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, Anthony Marwood, Gil Shaham and members of the Belcea, Doric, Juilliard and Brentano string quartets, and performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Festival appearances include Music@Menlo, Moritzburg and Yellow Barn. Also a passionate advocate for new music and its social relevance, Alice created *Drowning Monuments*, a noted multimedia project on climate change that brought together five world premieres for solo violin.

On stage tonight

First Violins

Alice Ivy-Pemberton Leader

Vesselin Gellef 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

Yang Zhang

Katalin Varnagy

Thomas Eisner

Sylvain Vasseur

Nilufar Alimaksumova

Daniel Pukach

Alison Strange

Will Hillman

Camille Buitenhuis

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal

Chair supported by The Candide Trust

Emma Oldfield Co-Principal

Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Kate Birchall

Marie-Anne Mairesse

Joseph Maher

Sophie Phillips

Chair supported by Friends of the Orchestra

Sioni Williams

Ricky Gore

Kate Cole

Lyrít Milgram

Paula Clifton-Everest

Violas

Benjamin Roskams

Guest Principal

Benedetto Pollani

Lucia Ortiz Saucó

Laura Vallejo

Martin Wray

Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden

Michelle Bruil

Alistair Scahill

Terry Nettle

Charles Cross

Anita Kurowska

Cellos

Henry Shapard Principal

Wayne Kwon

Chair supported by an anonymous donor

David Lae

Francis Bucknall

Tom Roff

Helen Thomas

Victoria Harrild

Andrea Kim

Double Basses

Hugh Kluger Principal

George Peniston

Tom Walley

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Laura Murphy

Chair supported by Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter

Adam Wynter

Catherine Ricketts

Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal

Chair supported by Malcolm & Alison Thwaites

Stewart McIlwham*

Chair supported by The Thompson Family Charitable Trust

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal

Alice Munday

Chair supported by David & Yi Buckley

Cor Anglais

Sue Böbling* Principal

Chair supported by Dr Barry Grimaldi

Clarinets

Thomas Watmough

Principal

Chair supported by Roger Greenwood

Emily Crook

Bass Clarinet

Paul Richards* Principal

Bassoons

Simon Estell* Principal

Helen Storey*

Horns

John Ryan* Principal

Martin Hobbs

Mark Vines Co-Principal

Gareth Mollison

Duncan Fuller

Trumpets

Tom Nielsen* Principal

Anne McAneney*

Trombones

David Whitehouse Principal

Andrew Cole

Bass Trombone

Lyndon Meredith Principal

Tuba

Lee Tsarmaklis* Principal

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Timpani

Jonathan Phillips

Guest Principal

Percussion

Andrew Barclay* Principal

Chair supported by Gill & Garf Collins

**Professor at a London conservatoire*

The LPO also acknowledges the following chair supporters whose players are not present:

Sir Nigel Boardman & Prof.

Lynda Gratton

Sir Simon Robey

Victoria Robey CBE

Joe Topley & Tracey

Countryman

The Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

Video series: Humans of the Orchestra

Our YouTube video series 'Humans of the Orchestra' gives LPO audiences a chance to get to know the people behind the music – the personalities, stories and passions of our players.

So far, we've featured Leader Pieter Schoeman, Principal Cello Kristina Blaumane, Principal Trumpet Paul Beniston, Principal Tuba Lee Tsarmaklis, Principal Bass Trombone Lyndon Meredith and Principal Bassoon Jonathan Davies – with more to come soon!

Watch on our YouTube channel by scanning the QR code, or visit [youtube.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra](https://www.youtube.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra)



Jonathon Heyward

conductor



© Kaupo Kikkas

American conductor Jonathon Heyward became Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in 2023/24, recently extending his contract to 2030/31. He also holds the Artistic & Music Director positions with the Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center.

Jonathon made his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in January 2024, when he conducted a programme of works by John Williams at the Royal Festival Hall, including the UK premiere of his Violin Concerto No. 2 with soloist Anne-Sophie Mutter. This season, as well as concerts with the LPO tonight in London and tomorrow at Saffron Hall, Jonathon returns to the Danish National and Detroit symphony orchestras, and makes his debut with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Recent highlights include concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Castilla y León Symphony Orchestra, Galicia Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, and at the BBC Proms with Chineke! In the US, he has appeared with The Cleveland Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Jonathan made his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 2020, conducting Hannah Kendall's *The Knife of Dawn*, and led the world premiere of Giorgio Battistelli's *Wake*, in a production by Graham Vick for the Birmingham Opera Company, in 2018. He also conducted Weill's *Lost in the Stars* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in 2017 and, last season, launched a four-year 'Verdi Opera Initiative' with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, commencing with performances of *Aida*; he returns next summer to lead *Rigoletto*.

Jonathon is a passionate advocate for music education and community outreach. He has been recognised among *TIME* magazine's 'Next Generation Leaders' and Bloomberg's 'Ones to Watch'.

Pieter Schoeman

violin



Photos © Benjamin Ealovega

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.

Both Pieter and Kristina feature in our 'Humans of the Orchestra' YouTube series, giving you a chance to get to know the people behind the music! Scan the QR code to watch.



Kristina Blaumane

cello



Kristina Blaumane has been Principal Cello of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2007.

Kristina was born in Riga and graduated from the Latvian Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. She has performed as soloist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, Chicago Civic Orchestra,

Kremerata Baltica, Britten Sinfonia, Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, Sofia Soloists, Netherlands Wind Ensemble and Dalarna Sinfonietta, as well as all the main orchestras in Latvia.

As a chamber musician, Kristina has worked in partnership with such renowned artists as Isaac Stern, Gidon Kremer, Yo-Yo Ma, Yuri Bashmet, Leif Ove Andsnes, Janine Jansen, Julian Rachlin, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Bruno Giuranna, Misha Maisky, Nikolaj Znaider, Tatyana Grindenko and Oleg Maisenberg, among others, and has performed at festivals such as Lockenhaus, Gstaad, Salzburg, Verbier, Basel, Jerusalem, Utrecht, Spitalfields, Cheltenham, Aldeburgh, Homecoming and Crescendo.

Kristina is a keen promoter of new music. She has given a number of world premieres and several works are dedicated to her, among them concertos by Dobrinka Tabakova, Kristaps Pētersons, Pēteris Plakidis and Artem Vassiliev. In March 2023 she was the soloist in the world premiere of Elena Langer's *The Dong with a Luminous Nose* with the LPO, which was later released on the LPO Label. Kristina appears as a soloist on the ECM debut disc of composer Dobrinka Tabakova, which reached No. 2 in the UK classical charts and received a Grammy nomination.

Kristina's chair in the LPO is generously supported by Bianca & Stuart Roden.

Harmony with Nature

Tonight's works and our 2025/26 season theme

This season, we invite audiences to join us in exploring one of the most urgent conversations of our time – our relationship with the natural world – through the power of music. We'll marvel at oceans, forests, caves, mountains and wildlife through works by Beethoven, Sibelius, Mendelssohn, Elgar and Dvořák; masterpieces of an era that saw nature as a mirror of human emotion – but also, perhaps, experienced it more immediately and organically than in the digital age.

Closer to our own time, voices as diverse as Duke Ellington, John Luther Adams, Gustavo Díaz-Jerez and Anna Thorvaldsdóttir have all found an unquenchable source of creative energy in the processes of nature, from river deltas to volcanic eruptions. For composers such as Anna Korsun, Gabriela Lena Frank and Terence Blanchard (whose powerful meditation on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina receives its UK premiere), humanity enters the picture. As destroyer or protector? Or simply as an organic, inextricable part of nature itself?

Throughout the season, we'll also be partnering with local environmental organisations, and welcoming pre-concert speakers, as we attempt to use the power of classical music to encourage environmental stewardship. We hope you'll join us!

Check out the full season at
lpo.org.uk/harmony-with-nature

Nature's voice in tonight's programme

For the composers of the Romantic generation, nature was a kind of storybook, where forests, mountains and rivers echoed the joys and sorrows of the human heart. In *In Nature's Realm*, Antonín Dvořák's love of the Czech countryside sings and dances through music that feels open-air, radiant, and full of life. Later in tonight's programme, works by Johannes Brahms and Robert Schumann unfold like vast, elemental landscapes, rich in contrast and emotional depth. Together, they reflect a shared Romantic impulse – to find meaning, balance and connection through the natural world and the emotions it stirs.

The Nature Dialogues

Our final pre-concert talk exploring the season's theme of *Harmony with Nature*

Book free tickets online at lpo.org.uk

Harmony with our Changing Planet

Friday 17 April 2026, 6pm, Royal Festival Hall

As extreme weather events grow more destructive, how can societies adapt – and how can art help us face loss and find hope?

Terence Blanchard's deeply personal response to Hurricane Katrina, *A Tale of God's Will*, transformed grief into powerful symphonic jazz, capturing both the devastation of his native New Orleans and the enduring strength of its people.

This pre-concert talk with Professor Gail Whiteman – head of the Nature & Climate Impact Team at the University of Exeter – explores what it means to live, and make music, in harmony with a changing planet.



Programme notes

Antonín Dvořák

1841–1904

Overture: In Nature's Realm

1891



Courtesy of the Royal College of Music, London

At the beginning of the 1890s, Dvořák was still committed to the 'Classical-Romanticism' of his friend, mentor and champion Johannes Brahms, with its preference for abstract musical forms – symphonies, concertos, string quartets, etc. But he was beginning to feel the pull of the radical romantic symphonic poem, espoused by the arch-progressive Liszt, with its stress on the evocation of mood or the illustration of stories.

Dvořák's joyous, refreshingly out-of-doors *In Nature's Realm* is usually performed on its own, but it was conceived as the first part of an orchestral trilogy, the other two pieces being the tone-poems *Carnival* and *Othello* – informally he called the whole cycle 'Nature, Life and Love'. All three are labelled 'Overture', but in character they are closer to symphonic poems. In the words of Dvořák's pioneering biographer, Otakar Šourek, these three pieces portray 'the impression of the solitary, wrapped about by the exalted stillness of the summer night; the impression of a man seized into the joyous vortex of life, and finally the feeling of a man in the power of a violent love poisoned by jealousy.'

When the three 'overtures' are performed together, the idea of nature wearing three very different faces can emerge powerfully, especially given Dvořák's telling use of a linking 'nature' theme, first heard on violas and bassoons at the start of *In Nature's Realm*. But, perhaps understandably, audiences have tended to prefer the uplifting pastoral poetry of *In Nature's Realm* for its own sake, without the baleful reminder (*Othello*) that joy and love can go terribly wrong. It emerges in a kind of arch form, beginning more or less as it ended, its second theme recalling a Czech hymn, 'Let us sing joyfully', a reminder that for the devout Dvořák, nature was a direct revelation of God. For many Romantics, products of cities or towns, nature was something that had to be discovered. For the village born-and-bred Dvořák, it was more of a given. There is no yearning to belong here, only joy in belonging.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

Programme notes

Johannes Brahms

1833–97

Double Concerto in A minor for violin, cello and orchestra

1887

Pieter Schoeman violin

Kristina Blaumane cello

1. Allegro

2. Andante

3. Vivace non troppo



The concerto was one of the most popular of all musical forms in the 19th century. This was the era of the Romantic virtuoso soloist: audiences loved the idea of the superhuman individual taking on the might of the full symphony orchestra and emerging victorious. What a perfect vehicle for an age intoxicated with dashing, sensational figures like the poet Byron, the violinist Niccolò Paganini and the pianist-composer Franz Liszt. Something of this Romantic spirit – the suffering, striving, intensely charismatic soloist pitted against the elemental force of the orchestra – can be felt in Brahms's First Piano Concerto, composed during 1854–58.

But Brahms was a paradoxical figure – it's one of the things that makes him so fascinating. Part of him was Romantic to the core: a lonely misfit, sustained by an impossible love, laying bare his wounded heart in song after song (especially in the wonderful *Alto Rhapsody*). Yet there was another part of him that longed for something else: the contained formal strength and subtlety of great Classical and Baroque masters like Haydn and Mozart, Bach and Handel, and for the emotional 'objectivity' that they offered.

The Double Concerto for violin, cello and orchestra, composed in 1887, embodies this paradox magnificently. It contains some of Brahms's most romantically expressive music: strikingly the almost operatic 'love duet' for violin and cello at the heart of

Programme notes

the slow central movement. The first cello solo, only a few seconds into the first movement, is marked 'in modo d'un recitativo' – 'the style of a recitative' – a direct acknowledgement of the music's operatic character by a composer who never wrote an opera.

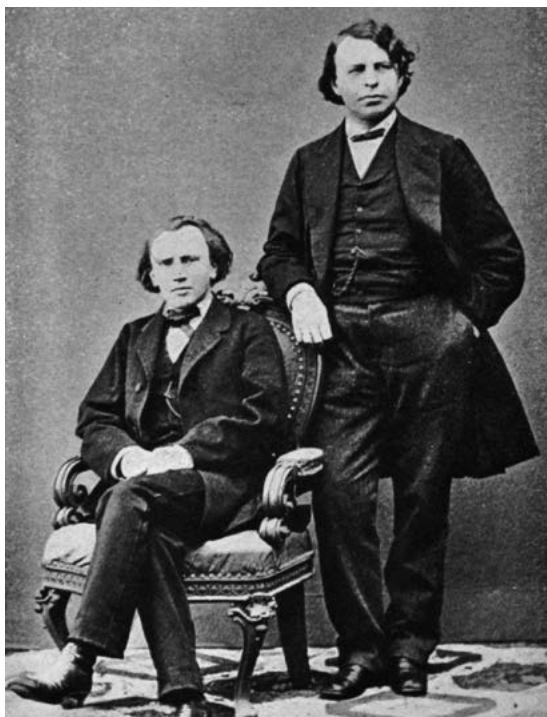
And yet this is a concerto with two soloists. Concertos with more than one star in the spotlight were common in Baroque times (think of Bach's glorious Double Concerto in D minor for two violins). Brahms also knew and valued Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, with solo violin and viola, and Beethoven's Triple Concerto for piano trio and orchestra. But in the Romantic era, the solo concerto had apparently conquered all – there's no room for more than one hero in the Byronic universe. In reverting to what would have been considered a strange, outmoded form at the time, Brahms showed that he was also not of his time.

Structurally, it is more compact than any of the solo concertos. In the first movement particularly, the solo violin and cello writing can be stirringly theatrical (visually as well as aurally), but Brahms is also careful to keep the solo contributions on an equal footing, as in chamber music. Soon after the cello's opening 'recitative' solo, the violin has its turn in the spotlight, only now with comments from the cello, with the two instruments finally fusing in rich *fortissimo* (very loud) chords. Later, in the lyrical second theme, the conversation between the two turns subtler, more confidential, and the orchestra tactfully restrains its power to allow the soloists to speak more clearly.

This relationship issue is also crucial in the central slow movement. After a short horn and woodwind introduction, violin and cello launch out together in one of those wonderful long-breathed tunes that are such a signature of Brahms's style. Yet in the middle section, violin and cello now enact an almost operatic 'love duet', passing ideas to each other now tenderly, now with impassioned urgency. The folk-coloured finale offers a refreshing contrast, but the dialogue element remains important, until at last both players join in a *bravura* display guaranteed to bring the house down.

There may be a personal element in all this. In 1880 Brahms had a serious falling-out with his close friend and collaborator, the virtuoso violinist and composer Joseph Joachim. The Double Concerto seems to have been conceived partly as a peace offering to Joachim. Yet it's striking that Brahms did not offer his old friend another violin concerto, but a work in which the violin must come to an accommodation with the cello – an instrument Brahms loved and wrote for with great feeling. Hearing the Double Concerto for the first time, Brahms's friend, confidante and 'ideal' love Clara Schumann wrote that 'This Concerto is in a way a work of reconciliation', adding that 'Joachim and Brahms have spoken to one another again after years of silence' – a comment that could be applied just as readily to the music itself.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson



Johannes Brahms (seated) and Joseph Joachim

Interval – 20 minutes

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

Programme notes

Robert Schumann

1810–56

Symphony No. 4 in D minor

1841

1. *Ziemlich langsam – Lebhaft –*
2. *Romanze: Ziemlich langsam –*
3. *Scherzo: Lebhaft –*
4. *Langsam – Lebhaft –*



Courtesy of the Royal College of Music, London

At the age of 30, Schumann was a composer who had concentrated almost entirely on the small-scale forms of piano music and song. His only serious attempt at working on the broader canvas provided by the orchestra had been two movements of a symphony composed in 1832 and quickly withdrawn. But his desire to write symphonic music was strong, fed by persistent encouragement from his future wife Clara Wieck, and it received another important stimulus in 1839 when he played a major part in bringing to light Schubert's forgotten 'Great C major' Symphony (No. 9): 'Oh, that I could write such symphonies myself', he wrote to Clara in his excitement. At last, in 1841, the dam burst in a flood of orchestral music: two completed symphonies, an abortive third, the *Overture, Scherzo and Finale*, Op. 52, and a piece that was later to become the first movement of the Piano Concerto. The creative surge was so great, indeed, that the First Symphony, with spring as its fitting inspiration, was composed in draft in just four days.

The First Symphony was premiered in Leipzig on 31 March under the direction of Mendelssohn, and the success of it meant that Schumann was soon enthusiastically at work on another. 'Robert's spirit is very active', wrote Clara in her diary. 'I hear the D minor wildly sounding in the distance, so that I know already in advance, it is once again a work emerging from the bottom of his heart.' For his own part, Robert had written in his own diary that 'My next symphony will be called "Clara".' Composed between May and September, it was performed for the first time on

Programme notes

6 December, but this time the reception was a cool one. Disheartened, Schumann withdrew the work, and when he finally revised it ten years later as his 'Fourth' Symphony, it was only after making a number of revisions. Some of these were structural, but most involved a thickening of the scoring – tonight's performance follows the customary modern-day practice of presenting the 1851 revision, the version for which Schumann himself expressed preference.

Perhaps this symphony's initial failure with the public can be put down to its formal innovations. Although it was not until he revised it that Schumann actually marked the four movements to be played without a break, the sense of a single 'symphonic fantasy' (as he initially thought of renaming it) is present even in the original version. And whereas the First Symphony had relied for unity on references to a single, easily recognised motto, the Fourth went several steps further, employing a complex web of interrelated themes derived from the work's slow introduction. Thus, for example, material from the first movement's central development section resurfaces as the main theme of the finale, and the slow movement's middle section is clearly related to the introduction's sinuous

string lines, while also forming the basis of the following movement's Trio. Similar examples are too numerous to catalogue here, but the variety and life which Schumann extracts from them, and the wholly convincing symphonic shape he achieves – exuberant allegro, poetic slow movement, sturdy *Scherzo* and climactic finale – are testimony to his compositional skill and invention.

Programme note © Lindsay Kemp

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Terence Blanchard



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Carnival of the Animals

Wed 15 Apr 2026, 7.30pm
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Dvořák Symphony No. 7
Ryan Carter Piano Concerto
(world premiere)*

Saint-Saëns The Carnival of the
Animals (with film animation by
Sandra Albukrek)

Lidiya Yankovskaya conductor
Tomoko Mukaiyama piano
Bizjak Piano Duo

*This project is supported by the Daniel W. Dietrich '64 Fund for Innovation in the Arts, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY, USA.

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Post-concert event
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Foyer

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Fri 17 Apr 2026, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall

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Terence Blanchard A Tale of God's
Will: A Requiem for Katrina

Daniela Candillari conductor
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Free pre-concert talk
6.00pm | Royal Festival Hall
Harmony with our Changing
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Professor Gail Whiteman discusses resilience, creativity and climate change: see page 9.



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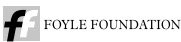
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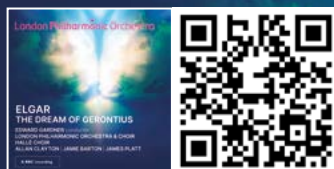


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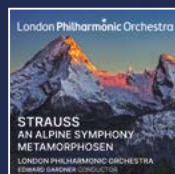


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Such support also enables the LPO to drive lasting social impact through our industry-leading education and community programme, supporting rising talent, those affected by homelessness, and adults and young people with disabilities - designed to build and diversify the talent pipeline and share the unique joy and power of music more widely.



Donate

Whether you make a checkout donation, give to an appeal, or choose to remember the LPO with a gift in your Will, donations of all sizes make an impact. Your support will help us continue to promote diversity and inclusivity in classical music and nurture the next generation of talent.

Join

Joining one of our membership schemes will not only support the Orchestra and our mission, but will also give you access to a host of exclusive benefits designed to enhance your experience and build a closer relationship with the Orchestra and our family of supporters – from private rehearsals, to members' bars, private events and priority booking. Membership starts at just £6 per month.

Partner

We're virtuosos of creative collaboration, expertly crafting bespoke partnerships that hit the right notes. We tailor each bespoke partnership to your strategic business objectives, combining exceptional experiences that deepen client relationships, forge new connections, elevate your brand, and create buzzworthy content that leaves audiences captivated by a compelling brand story.

We're also passionate about using music and our work to increase social value. By partnering together across a shared purpose and values, we can leave a positive, lasting impact on the communities we engage, deepening your CSR and SDG commitments.

Find out how you can support at [lpo.org.uk/support us](https://lpo.org.uk/support-us)



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