



**Free concert
programme**

London Philharmonic Orchestra



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



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London Philharmonic Orchestra

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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 Queen Elizabeth Hall

Wednesday 15 April 2026 | 7.30pm

Carnival of the Animals

Dvořák

Symphony No. 7 (37')

Ryan Carter

Piano Concerto (*world premiere*)* (18')

Interval (20')

Saint-Saëns

The Carnival of the Animals (with film animation) (22')

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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COCKAYNE

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

Carnival of the Animals

Tonight's concert begins with a symphony by Czech composer Dvořák, full of energy, drama and sweeping melodies. Next we hear the world premiere of Ryan Carter's Piano Concerto, bringing a fresh, contemporary voice to the programme. After the interval comes the colourful *Carnival of the Animals* by French composer Saint-Saëns, brought to life with a playful film animation.

Who's on stage?



Lidiya Yankovskaya – conductor

American conductor Lidiya is our guest conductor tonight. She's known for her bold, collaborative leadership and her ability to bring fresh energy to opera and orchestral repertoire alike.



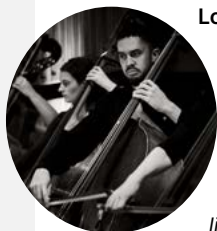
Tomoko Mukaiyama – piano

Japanese-Dutch pianist Tomoko is well-known for her interpretations of brand new works, like tonight's Piano Concerto. Always exploring new ways to connect with audiences, her work ranges from intimate solo piano projects to large-scale multimedia installations.



Bizjak Piano Duo

Serbian sisters Lidija and Sanja Bizjak are acclaimed for their dynamic performances of the piano duo repertoire, collaborating with major orchestras worldwide. Tonight is their LPO debut.



London Philharmonic Orchestra

Tonight there are over 70 LPO musicians on stage. Many of our talented members enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral roles.

Turn to page 6 for tonight's player list.

What to expect

Take your seats...

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



37 min

Antonín Dvořák Symphony No. 7

Composed during a turbulent period in his life, Czech composer Dvořák's Seventh Symphony is full of dramatic contrasts, sweeping melodies and intense emotional depth. Each of the four movements reflects his mastery of orchestral colour, moving seamlessly between heroic struggle and tender lyricism.

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



18 min

Ryan Carter Piano Concerto (*world premiere*)

This new piece, for solo piano and orchestra, receives its first ever performance tonight. A world premiere is a rare chance to hear a new work come to life, and we're honoured that composer Ryan Carter is here tonight.

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

Interval 20 min



22 min

Camille Saint-Saëns The Carnival of the Animals

The Carnival of the Animals is a playful suite of 14 short movements (some less than a minute long!), each bringing to life a different creature through music – from the majestic lion to the delicate swan. Tonight's performance is accompanied by a film animation by Sandra Albucrek, adding an extra layer to the music's humour and charm.

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

Tonight – After Dark with the LPO

After tonight's concert, why not stay for a special free 'After Dark' performance by the Orchestra's brass and percussion players in the Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer?

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Zoological Society of London, it opens with Walton's *Roaring Fanfare*, written 50 years ago for ZSL. 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*.

The performance starts at 9.30pm, and 'After Dark' tickets are £10, or free to ticket-holders for the main evening concert (just show your 7.30pm concert ticket).

Coming soon: our 2026/27 season!

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.



LPO Friends enjoy many other amazing benefits, including a private bar and opportunities to meet our musicians. Membership starts from just £6 per month. To find out more, scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/friends

Future Firsts – 2026/27 applications

Our annual LPO 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. For more information, scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/futurefirsts. Applications close on **6 May 2026**.

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 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

Thomas Eisner

Yang Zhang

Vera Beumer

Nilufar Alimaksumova

Amanda Smith

Kate Cole

Jamie Hutchinson

Daniel Pukach

Alice Apreda Howell

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal

Chair supported by The Candide Trust

Emma Oldfield Co-Principal

Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Coco Inman

Kate Birchall

Sophie Phillips

Chair supported by Friends of the Orchestra

Ashley Stevens

Marie-Anne Mairesse

Nancy Elan

Joseph Maher

Nynke Hijlkema

Sioni Williams

Violas

Benjamin Roskams

Guest Principal

Laura Vallejo

Benedetto Pollani

Martin Wray

Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden

Lucia Ortiz Saucó

Katharine Leek

Michelle Bruil

Joseph Fisher

Jisu Song

Raquel López Bolívar

Cellos

Kristina Blaumane Principal

Chair supported by Bianca & Stuart Roden

Henry Shapard Co-Principal

Wayne Kwon

Chair supported by an anonymous donor

David Lale

Auriol Evans

Francis Bucknall

Leo Melvin

Iain Ward

Double Basses

Hugh Kluger Principal

Laura Murphy

Chair supported by Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter

Tom Walley

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Ben Havinden-Williams

Cathy Colwell

Yijia Cui

Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal

Chair supported by Malcolm & Alison Thwaites

Daniel Shao

Piccolo

Daniel Shao

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal

Jack Tostevin-Hall

Clarinets

Benjamin Mellefont*

Principal

Chair supported by Sir Nigel Boardman & Prof. Lynda Gratton

Thomas Watmough

Chair supported by Roger Greenwood

Paul Richards*

Bass Clarinet

Paul Richards* Principal

Bassoons

Jonathan Davies* Principal

Chair supported by Sir Simon Robey

Helen Storey*

Horns

Annemarie Federle

Principal

Chair supported by Victoria Robey CBE

John Ryan* Principal

Martin Hobbs

Mark Vines Co-Principal

Gareth Mollison

Trumpets

Paul Beniston* Principal

Chair supported by the Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

Tom Nielsen* Principal

Anne McAneney*

Trombones

Mark Templeton* Principal

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

David Whitehouse

Bass Trombone

Lyndon Meredith Principal

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

Celeste

Fionnuala Ward

*Professor at a London conservatoire

Video series: Humans of the Orchestra

Have you seen our new video series? 'Humans of the Orchestra' gives LPO audiences and fans 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 and Principals Kristina Blaumane, Paul Beniston, Lee Tsarmaklis, Lyndon Meredith and Jonathan Davies – with more to come very soon!

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



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

David & Yi Buckley
Dr Barry Grimaldi
The Thompson Family
Charitable Trust
Neil Westreich

Lidiya Yankovskaya

conductor

© Todd Rosenberg



Lidiya Yankovskaya is a conductor with powerful range – from Verdi and Wagner to Price and Prokofiev – and an unshakeable sense of classical music as a living, responsive art form. Her bold, collaborative leadership has shaped the development of dozens of world premieres – including over 20 new operas – and brought fresh urgency to performances with major orchestras and opera companies across the globe. In addition to her international work, she made a transformative local impact as Music Director of Chicago Opera Theater, earning consistent recognition from the *Chicago Tribune*, which named her Chicagoan of the Year.

Lidiya made her London Philharmonic Orchestra debut in January 2025, conducting 'An evening with Amjad Ali Khan' at the Royal Festival Hall, featuring Khan's own Concerto for Sarod alongside works by Reena Esmail and AR Rahman.

This season, fresh off a return to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to lead Wagner and Debussy, Lidiya makes her Scandinavian debut at Norwegian National Opera with Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. She conducts the same work at The Grange Festival in a return to the UK, and brings her interpretation of Bartók's masterwork *Bluebeard's Castle* to the Omaha Symphony. Elsewhere, she conducts orchestras around the world, including her first performances at Vienna's iconic Musikverein with the Tonkünstler Orchester and a return engagement with The Phoenix Symphony.

Following her acclaimed Australian debut with Puccini's full *Il trittico*, Lidiya was immediately reengaged by Opera Australia for a new production of *Carmen*. She has also recently conducted *Eugene Onegin* at Hamburg State Opera, *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*

and *Bluebeard's Castle* at English National Opera, and productions at Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Seattle Opera. On the concert stage, high-profile engagements include appearances with the Los Angeles, New York and Royal Liverpool Philharmonics; concerts with the Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and National symphony orchestras; and Julia Wolfe's *Anthracite Fields* at Carnegie Hall. She also enjoys an ongoing relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, leading concerts at both Symphony Center and the Ravinia Festival.

In her seven seasons as Music Director of Chicago Opera Theater, Lidiya spearheaded the commissioning of 11 new operas, advancing the work of six female composers and seven creators of colour. She led the Chicago premieres of Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick* and Joby Talbot's *Everest*, as well as Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* and Szymanowski's *King Roger*, before concluding her tenure with a landmark new Francesca Zambello production of Shostakovich's *The Nose*. Under her leadership, COT established the Vanguard Initiative, an immersive two-year residency for emerging opera composers that has enriched the repertory with vital new voices and experiences that resonate with today's audiences.

This adroit combination of musical skill and cultural advocacy is a hallmark of Lidiya's career. When she immigrated to the United States from St Petersburg, Russia, as a refugee, her devotion to music remained a constant in her life. Those experiences inspired her to found the Refugee Orchestra Project, which proclaims the societal relevance of refugees through music. ROP has brought that message to hundreds of thousands of listeners around the world, including appearances in London, Washington, D.C., and the United Nations.

Tomoko Mukaiyama

piano



© Paul Koolker

Tomoko Mukaiyama is an Amsterdam-based, Japanese-born pianist, visual artist and multidisciplinary maker. With studies at conservatoires in Japan, the USA and the Netherlands, her roots are found in Western classical music. Her career gained momentum in 1991, when she won the International Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition with Conlon Nancarrow and Meredith Monk. Since then, she has collaborated with highly renowned ensembles and orchestras, including Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt, Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic.

Tomoko made her London Philharmonic Orchestra debut in 2022, when she gave the world premiere of Agata Zubel's Piano Concerto No. 2 at the Royal Festival Hall under the baton of Edward Gardner.

Drawn to the unknown, Tomoko challenges our expectations of a traditional concert experience. Since the turn of the millennium, she has built a portfolio as a visual artist, creating immersive installations for leading platforms such as the Biennale of Sydney, Oerol Festival, the Yokohama Triennale and the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial. Her earlier projects clearly showcase a desire to reinvent piano performances. *for you* (2005) offered a public piano recital designed for a single audience member, while *wasted* (2009) was a monumental travelling installation of 12,000 white silk dresses dedicated to fertility, for which the feedback of the audience was used in a concert of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

As an advocate for cultural exchange, Tomoko actively seeks collaborations outside her own field and has worked alongside a diverse array of film directors, designers, dancers, choreographers and photographers, ranging from architect Toyo Ito and film director Aryan Kaganof to choreographer Jiří Kylián. Her work can be experienced in a wide variety of places depending on the context, the audience and her collaborators. She performs anywhere, from New York's famous Lincoln Center to more unconventional spaces like an art gallery or even a local fish market. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she pioneered new ways to connect through *A Live* series (2020–21) with filmmaker Reinier van Brummelen – a virtual concert series broadcast from various unique locations.

Tomoko's work is strongly connected to the world around us. She is not afraid to show her version of the truth, often sharing with her audiences a clear political message. Today, her practice continues to evolve in ambitious new directions, highlighted this year by her very first solo exhibition, at Arts Maebashi in Japan. Concurrently, her foundation has embraced a new philosophy under the banner *WE ARE THE HOUSE*. Marking a noticeable shift in focus, this initiative slowly moves the spotlight away from Tomoko as an individual artist and towards building a dynamic collective of international makers and thinkers, as well as local voices, specifically inviting those who challenge existing systems and stand up for minorities.

Bizjak Piano Duo



Serbian sisters Lidija and Sanja Bizjak were born in Belgrade in 1976 and 1988 respectively, and both studied with Zlata Maleš before joining Jacques Rouvier's class at the Paris Conservatoire. After initially pursuing careers as soloists, in 2002 they launched their duo career, performing with the Belgrade Philharmonic

Orchestra and winning two special prizes at the ARD Munich Piano Duo competition in 2005.

Particularly popular with audiences in France, the duo have gone on to perform at the Auditorium de Radio France, Musée d'Orsay, Salle Gaveau, Roque d'Anthéron, Nohant, Sully, Auvers-sur-Oise, Palazzetto Bru Zane in Venice, La Folle Journée in Nantes, Ekaterinburg, and in Japan. They regularly perform with orchestras such as the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Sinfonia Varsovia, Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège and Stuttgart Philharmonic. Tonight is their debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Bizjak Piano Duo made their BBC Proms debut in 2010, when they performed *The Carnival of the Animals* with the Britten Sinfonia. They have recorded Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* in piano four-hand versions for the French label Mirare, and Martinů's and Poulenc's Concertos for Two Pianos with the Stuttgart Philharmonic for Onyx, both highly acclaimed in the press.


London
Philharmonic
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2026 GALA - STELLAR

Join us for our 2026 Gala –
Stellar – at HERE at Outernet
on Monday 29 June.

This exceptional night will feature world-class performances and exquisite dining in a venue like no other. Prepare to be captivated and immersed in an evening with the LPO. Our Gala will raise vital funds to support the LPO's artistic and social impact work; supporting the next generation – of musicians, of audiences and of communities – ensuring a creative, confident and flourishing society.

For more information, including ticket and table prices, scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/gala



HERE
AT OUTERNET

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 Thorvaldsdottir 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're also 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

Dvořák's Seventh Symphony was composed in 1884 while he was living in Prague, at a turning point in his career. Though he was navigating new international attention and commissions, the music still reflects the landscapes of his native Bohemia. We'll hear the restless energy of the lower strings suggesting stormy skies, the flowing, river-like melodies of the second movement, and moments of pastoral calm. Even in its darker passages, the Symphony is grounded in the rhythms and colours of the Czech countryside.

After the interval, Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals* brings a playful, imaginative side of nature to life, with music that captures the movement and character of a wide array of creatures. Together, these works show how composers can take inspiration from the natural world – from rivers and forests to animals great and small – to create music that's lively, vivid, and full of feeling.

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

Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70

1885

1. Allegro maestoso

2. Poco adagio

3. Scherzo: Vivace

4. Finale: Allegro

The Seventh might not be Dvořák's most popular symphony, but it's arguably his best. In the composer's own mind, he simply had to deliver something special for the London Philharmonic Society, who had commissioned the piece in 1884. His career was at a crossroads: success had finally come, offers were being made, and contacts were putting themselves forward. Brahms and others were urging Dvořák to consider a move from his hometown of Prague to Vienna or Berlin. All Dvořák had to do – in his own mind – was prove that he could write first-class symphonic music already; music that didn't rely overtly on indigenous Czech folk themes and that demonstrated a firm grasp of symphonic thought.

On that front, Dvořák more than succeeded with his Seventh Symphony. It was first performed on 22 April 1885 in St James's Hall, London, and was immediately hailed as a masterpiece. As a symphony, it's near flawless, and certainly Dvořák's most organic and well-argued. For that, the composer had Brahms to thank. Dvořák had recently heard Brahms's Third Symphony, whose taut, concise and clear-cut structure is wholly evident here. There are also a good few points of direct comparison: both symphonies contain radiant horn solos (you'll hear Dvořák's in his second movement) and both are stalked by a sense of underlying darkness.

That darkness – perhaps 'severity' is a better word – had been uncommon in Dvořák's music up to this point. The Seventh was the composer's first symphony written in a minor key and it only rarely finds the major. Even so, the joy and bustle associated with Dvořák's music is somehow ever-present – either fighting to be heard or peering through the composer's minor-key

colourings. Perhaps it's the composer's profusion of rich melodies that keeps the Symphony so consistently radiant even when resolutely rooted in the minor.

So organic and rich in cross-referencing is the Seventh's music that an analysis of its themes and their origins is best left for academics. What's worth listening out for in the first movement, however, is the restlessness of Dvořák's lower strings, which helps create a feeling of impending stormy weather; throughout, instruments enter in a fragmentary fashion, each seeming to stride into the conversation with a conflicting view.

Dvořák's second movement is a continuous, river-like flow of inspired melodies opening with what sounds like an ancient chorale. The aforementioned horn solo that comes later represents one of the Symphony's only moments of warmth; a sudden appearance of the sun between clouds. Though the third movement features an idyllic Trio section, it's surrounded by a demonic dance built from an insistent, syncopated figure that recalls the *furiant*, a Czech folk dance.

Dvořák didn't want to over-egg his use of themes from Czech folk music in the Symphony, and uses them similarly fleetingly in his finale. This movement is a fierce tussle, relieved only by its bright secondary idea cast in a major key and first heard on cellos. Dvořák seems to triumph over the movement's nervous energy as he introduces a theme of distinctly Czech character on the flutes. In a dramatic coda, the Symphony's final paragraph, the music finally finds victory.

Programme note © Andrew Mellor

Programme notes

Ryan Carter

born 1980

Piano Concerto

world premiere

Tomoko Mukaiyama piano



© Dominica Eriksen

My work as a composer often addresses how emerging technologies affect our experience of music. This began 20 years ago when I asked myself whether humans would still compose music after the 'singularity', a theoretical point in technological development when ultra-intelligent machines would surpass human intelligence and begin improving themselves autonomously. After two years of reading and reflecting, I came to the (brilliantly insightful!) conclusion that humans will keep making music because humans want to make music.

In the intervening years, I have given less thought to this question and more thought to specific developments in mobile computing and social media. The prospect of machines replacing humans, however, has recently captured widespread attention, and I find myself asking the same old questions and arriving at the same old answers. The act of coming together to create music or witness the creation of music is a powerful experience that has served important social functions for a long time. Coming together can cultivate communal joy and foster empathy, and the importance of empathy in an uncertain future cannot be overstated. I am not the first composer to write a piano concerto, and I doubt that I will be the last. In a broad sense, this piece is not about anything new, but it does incorporate technologies that were not available for most of the history of the piano concerto. The sound of the piano is processed in real time and live video is generated during the performance, responding to the actions of the pianist.

My work does not reject technology, but rather seeks to use technology to enhance and expand human potential without replacing it. Above all else, this piece is a celebration of how live music reaffirms our shared humanity.

Ryan Carter, March 2026

Programme notes

About the composer: Ryan Carter

Ryan Carter (b. 1980) composes for instruments, voices and computers. His work often explores new musical possibilities presented by emerging technologies, while remaining critical of the assumptions and unintended side effects embedded in them. Alternately playful, quirky, visceral and intense, his music has been described by *The New York Times* as 'imaginative ... like, say, a Martian dance party'.

Ryan has been commissioned by Carnegie Hall, the National Flute Association, the MATA Festival, Present Music, and many ensembles and soloists, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jerome Foundation, the American Composers Forum, and Meet the Composer. Awards include the Lee Ettelson Award, the Aaron Copland Award, the Left Coast Composition Contest, the National Association of Composers/USA Composer's Competition, the Publikumspreis at the Heidelberg Spring Festival, and the LA Phil Prize at Hack Music LA. Two portrait albums of his work can be heard on KAIROS Records.

An early innovator of interactive music for mobile devices, Ryan released *iMonkeypants* (an iOS album of motion-controlled interactive music) on the App Store in 2012. Beginning in 2017, he developed a web-based system for allowing audiences to interact with performers by playing motion-controlled sound on their phones. This has led to collaborations with several ensembles, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, who on 12 March 2024 gave the UK premiere of *Concerto Molto Grosso* for orchestra and audience, at St John's Waterloo as part of 'The Music in You' festival.

Raised in Wisconsin, Ryan Carter holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (BMus), Stony Brook University (MA) and New York University (PhD), where his teachers included Richard Hoffmann, Pauline Oliveros, Daniel Weymouth, Elizabeth Hoffman and Matthias Pintscher. Ryan has pursued additional studies with Louis Andriessen and Gillius van Bergeijk at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague (the Netherlands) and with Brad Garton at the Computer Music Center at Columbia University. Ryan is Associate Professor of Music at Hamilton College, New York State.

Interval – 20 minutes

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

Programme notes

Camille Saint-Saëns

1835–1921

The Carnival of the Animals

1886

with animations by Sandra Albukrek

Bizjak Piano Duo



Courtesy of the Royal College of Music, London

Camille Saint-Saëns was one of the most versatile and accomplished figures in French music of the late 19th century – a virtuoso pianist, organist and composer whose works range from grand symphonies to intimate chamber music. He wrote *The Carnival of the Animals* in 1886 as a lighthearted diversion, a sharp contrast to the more serious music he was known for. In fact, he valued his reputation so highly that he restricted the work's performance during his lifetime, allowing only one movement – 'The Swan' – to be heard in public.

The full suite was only published after his death, when audiences quickly embraced its wit, colour and imagination.

The piece unfolds as a sequence of brief musical portraits, each capturing an animal – or occasionally a human – with vivid character and humour. Saint-Saëns clearly delights in musical jokes throughout. Familiar tunes are gently parodied, unexpected instruments take the spotlight, and even pianists themselves come under playful scrutiny. The result is a work that remains one of Saint-Saëns' most beloved creations – a reminder that even the most serious composers sometimes just want to have fun.

1. Introduction and Royal March of the Lion

A grand opening – a proud, strutting lion announces itself with bold chords, majestic flourishes, and a touch of theatrical roar.

2. Hens and Roosters

Busy, clucking rhythms and sudden high-pitched interjections bring a lively barnyard scene to life.

3. Wild Donkeys (Swift Animals)

A whirlwind of racing notes, as two pianos race in parallel – quick, skittish and gone in a flash. This whole movement only lasts around 30 seconds!

4. Tortoises

A slow-motion joke – the familiar 'Can-can' tune from Offenbach's comic opera *Orpheus in the Underworld* is stretched into a languid, plodding crawl.

Programme notes

5. *The Elephant*

The double basses take the spotlight in another musical joke – their tune is borrowed from the *Scherzo* from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the 'Dance of the Sylphs' from Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*. Saint-Saëns transforms this airy music into something altogether more cumbersome.

6. *Kangaroos*

Springy, bouncing gestures capture the stop-start motion of bounding kangaroos, as the two pianos play a pattern of 'hopping' chords.

7. *The Aquarium*

Shimmering textures and flowing lines create a magical, underwater world.

8. *People with Long Ears (Donkeys)*

Violins bray back and forth, leaping abruptly between high and low notes in a playful musical tease.

9. *The Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods*

A calm woodland backdrop, with a distant, echoing cuckoo call played by the clarinet.

10. *The Aviary*

Fluttering strings and a soaring flute evoke birds in lively flight.

11. *Pianists*

A tongue-in-cheek portrait – we'll hear scales and exercises, as if from a practice room. The original edition has an editor's note instructing the players to imitate beginners and their awkwardness!

12. *Fossils*

Saint-Saëns uses the dry rattle of the xylophone to evoke clattering bones, quoting his own *Danse macabre*. Around it, a collage of familiar tunes – from nursery songs to opera – appears and overlaps, turning well-known melodies into playful 'fossils' of the musical past.

13. *The Swan*

A serene, flowing cello melody glides gracefully over rippling accompaniment.

14. *Finale*

In this lively curtain call, snippets of earlier movements reappear, as if the animals are parading past once more, before a joyful, bustling finish.

Sandra Albukrek: Creator of tonight's animated film



© Anush Abrar

Sandra Albukrek, born in Istanbul, a graduate of ENSAD (Arts-Déco) in Paris, is an Italian and Turkish artist who has been living and working in Geneva since 2010. As a director, author and scenographer, she handles drawing, painting, sculpture, writing and performance arts with equal poetry.

In 2018, deciding to link her visual research to classical music, she created an unprecedented format: films of animated paintings conceived for a classical music work and designed to be projected during concerts, with the artist at the controls of her film in order to adapt it to the rhythm of the orchestra, making her the first and only video jockey of classical music.

She created the film *The Carnival of the Animals*, whose premiere took place in Geneva in 2021, followed by *The Valais Carnival of the Animals (Ballade)* for a gala concert celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Verbier Festival in 2023. Her animated films, each composed of several hundred original paintings and humour-filled scripts, have been acclaimed by international critics.

We'd love to hear from you

We hope you enjoyed tonight's concert. Could you spare a few moments afterwards to complete a short survey about your experience? Your feedback is invaluable to us and will help to shape our future plans.



Just scan the QR code to begin. Thank you!



Daniela Candillari



Terence Blanchard

Terence Blanchard: A Requiem for Katrina

Fri 17 Apr 2026, 7.30pm

Duke Ellington The River Suite
Terence Blanchard A Tale of God's
Will: A Requiem for Katrina

Daniela Candillari conductor
Terence Blanchard trumpet
The Terence Blanchard Quintet

Free pre-concert talk
6.00pm | Royal Festival Hall
Harmony with our Changing Planet

Professor Gail Whiteman discusses
resilience, creativity and climate
change: see page 10.

London Philharmonic Orchestra



Edward Gardner

Final Royal Festival Hall concerts this season

2026/27 season



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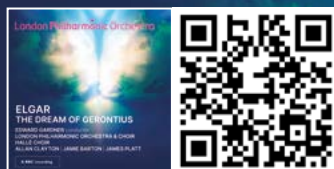


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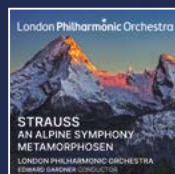


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