



**Free concert  
programme**

# London Philharmonic Orchestra



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



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# London Philharmonic Orchestra

**Principal Conductor** Edward Gardner supported by Aud Jepsen  
**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

Saturday 21 March 2026 | 6.30pm

# Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

### John Luther Adams

Become River (16')

### Clarice Assad

Terra: Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra  
(*European premiere*) (22')

*Interval (20')*

### Piazzolla (arr. Desyatnikov)

The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires (26')

### Pablo Rus Broseta

conductor

### Jonathan Davies

bassoon\*

### Alice Ivy-Pemberton

violin

### Lauren Oakley & Kai Widdrington

dancers

\*LPO chair supported by Sir Simon Robey

Supported by Cockayne Grants for the Arts, a Donor Advised Fund,  
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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

### *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*

This concert comprises three pieces of music, all linked to our season theme, 'Harmony with Nature'. The first, *Become River*, by John Luther Adams, is calm and flowing. It's followed by Clarice Assad's *Terra*, in which LPO bassoonist Jonathan Davies steps into the spotlight. After the interval, the mood shifts to Buenos Aires with a piece by Piazzolla – vibrant, rhythmic music featuring violinist Alice Ivy-Pemberton and tonight's special guest dancers.

## Who's on stage?



### **Pablo Rus Broseta – conductor**

Pablo is tonight's guest conductor. Known for imaginative programmes that mix classic favourites with new music, the Spanish conductor has worked with orchestras across Europe and the USA. Tonight is his first ever concert with the LPO.



### **Jonathan Davies – bassoon** **Alice Ivy-Pemberton – violin**

Jon and Alice are both members of the LPO, so are used to playing as part of the Orchestra. But tonight both of them step into the spotlight as soloists: Jon in Clarice Assad's *Terra*, and Alice in Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*.



### **Lauren Oakley & Kai Widdrington – dancers**

If you're a fan of BBC's *Strictly*, you might recognise Lauren and Kai as two of the programme's professional dancers. They'll join our musicians on stage after the interval for Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*.



### **London Philharmonic Orchestra**

Tonight there are around 55 LPO musicians on stage. Our musicians represent over 14 different nationalities, and many enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral work.

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, Pablo, enters the stage. Once the applause dies down, sit back and enjoy the music ...



16 min

### **John Luther Adams** **Become River**

Inspired by the flow of water, this piece unfolds slowly and calmly, with sounds overlapping like currents. It's less about tunes, and more about atmosphere – music you can almost drift along with.



22 min

### **Clarice Assad** **Terra**

A concerto is a showpiece for a solo instrument accompanied by orchestra. In her bassoon concerto *Terra*, Brazilian-American composer Clarice Assad puts bassoonist Jonathan Davies centre-stage, letting his instrument sing, dance and show real personality. This is the first time *Terra* has been performed in Europe.

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

### Interval 20 min



26 min

### **Astor Piazzolla** **The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires**

These four tango-inspired movements paint musical pictures of life in Buenos Aires throughout the year. Expect sharp rhythms, sweeping melodies and plenty of attitude – brought to life by solo violinist Alice and tango dancers Lauren & Kai.

After the final piece, we applaud the performers. The conductor will acknowledge the Leader (chief First Violin), Vesselin, 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.

Keep your evening going after the concert at our 'After Dark' tango gig in the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer – free with your concert ticket. See opposite page for details.

## 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](mailto: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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## Pre- and post-concert

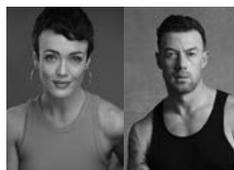
### 'The Nature Dialogues': Free pre-concert talk



At 5pm today in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, we welcome **Jeremy Wade**: extreme angler, author, and presenter of TV's *River Monsters* and *Mighty Rivers* for a free pre-concert talk. In conversation with Gail Gallie, he reflects on the dramatic decline of freshwater habitats, and champions the revival of the rivers that sustain both nature and communities – the perfect way to set the stage for an evening of music inspired by water and the Earth.

This event is part of 'The Nature Dialogues' – a series of free pre-concert talks by environmentalists, scientists and composers, offering fresh perspectives on the music and our season theme, *Harmony with Nature*. Turn to page 10 for details, or find out more and book your free tickets at [lpo.org.uk/harmony-with-nature](http://lpo.org.uk/harmony-with-nature)

### After Dark: Post-concert Tango with tonight's *Strictly* dancers



Tonight we're excited to welcome BBC One's *Strictly Come Dancing* dancers **Lauren Oakley and Kai Widdrington** to perform a live tango on stage during the concert.

Lauren and Kai will also join us afterwards for an 'After Dark' post-concert performance, from 8.30pm in the QEH foyer. LPO string players will play an intimate set of tango music, featuring more live dance from Lauren and Kai.

'After Dark' tickets are £10, or free to ticket-holders for the main evening concert (just show your 6.30pm concert ticket).

# London Philharmonic Orchestra

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© 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

## Vesselin Gellev

### Tonight's Leader

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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.



Bulgarian-born violinist Vesselin Gellev has been Sub-Leader of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2007.

Praised by *The New York Times* for his 'warmth and virtuosic brilliance', Vesselin has been a featured soloist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, New Haven Symphony Orchestra and Juilliard Orchestra, among others. He won First Prize at the Concert Artists Guild Competition in New York as a member of the Antares Quartet, and has recorded several albums and toured worldwide as Concertmaster of Kristjan Järvi's Grammy-nominated Absolute Ensemble.

Prior to joining the LPO, Vesselin was Leader of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra in the USA and the Spoleto Festival Orchestra in Italy. He has performed as Guest Leader with numerous orchestras in the UK and abroad, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Bern Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid at Teatro Real, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Vesselin received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School, New York, as a student of Robert Mann. He has served on the violin and chamber music faculties of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, and the Eleazar de Carvalho Music Festival in Fortaleza, Brazil.

# On stage tonight

## First Violins

Vesselin Gellev Leader  
Lasma Taimina  
Chair supported by Irina Gofman & Mr Rodrik V. G. Cave  
Minn Majoe  
Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria Chan  
Yang Zhang  
Sylvain Vasseur  
Amanda Smith  
Rasa Zukauskaitė  
Martin Höhmann  
Kate Cole  
Chu-Yu Yang

## Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal  
Chair supported by The Candide Trust  
Emma Oldfield Co-Principal  
Claudia Tarrant-Matthews  
Coco Inman  
Kate Birchall  
Ashley Stevens  
Nancy Elan  
Nynke Hijlkema

## Violas

Dunia Ershova  
Guest Principal  
Katharine Leek  
Benedetto Pollani  
Martin Wray  
Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden  
Laura Vallejo  
James Heron  
Shiry Rashkovsky

## Cellos

Kristina Blaumane Principal  
Chair supported by Bianca & Stuart Roden  
Henry Shapard Co-Principal  
Wayne Kwon  
Chair supported by an anonymous donor  
David Lale  
Leo Melvin  
Helen Thomas

## Double Basses

Kevin Rundell\* Principal  
Hugh Kluger  
George Peniston  
Elen Roberts

## Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal  
Chair supported by Malcolm & Alison Thwaites  
Hannah Grayson  
Stewart McIlwham\*

## Piccolos

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

## Oboes

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

## Clarinets

Benjamin Mellefont\*  
Principal  
Chair supported by Sir Nigel Boardman & Prof. Lynda Gratton  
Thomas Watmough  
Chair supported by Roger Greenwood

## Bassoons

Simon Estell\* Principal  
Helen Storey\*

## Horns

John Ryan\* Principal  
Martin Hobbs  
Mark Vines Co-Principal  
Gareth Mollison

## Trumpets

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

## Piano

Cíodna Shanahan

*\*Professor at a London conservatoire*

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

Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter  
Friends of the Orchestra  
Dr Barry Grimaldi  
Ryze Power  
Sir Simon Robey  
Eric Tomsett  
Neil Westreich  
The Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

## Video series: Humans of the Orchestra

Have you seen our new 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 Bassoon (and tonight's soloist) **Jonathan Davies**, Principal Trumpet **Paul Beniston**, Principal Bass Trombone **Lyndon Meredith** and Principal Tuba **Lee Tsarmaklis** – with more to come very soon!

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



# Pablo Rus Broseta

conductor

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© Nina Reinsdorf

Conductor Pablo Rus Broseta is distinguished by his dynamic programming and thoughtful interpretations. He has developed an extensive repertoire, ranging from Rameau to John Adams, giving special attention to both the great symphonic repertoire and new music. Having previously served as Music Director of the Jove Orquestra de la Generalitat Valenciana (Spain), and Assistant and then Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, he is currently Music Director of Grup Mixtour, a chamber orchestra he formed in 2011 to champion eclectic and diverse programmes.

Tonight is Pablo's debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Recent highlights include performances with Ensemble Modern, Basel Sinfonietta and Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España at their FOCUS Festival, and a production of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* at the Palau de les Arts. He has also led multiple projects with the SWR Symphonieorchester and the Orquesta Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, and made debuts with the Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa and Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León.

A tireless advocate of new music, Pablo thrives on taking risks with new works. He has collaborated closely with composers such as Wolfgang Rihm, Johannes Maria Staud, Thomas Adès, Philippe Manoury, Magnus Lindberg, Francisco Coll and Luca Francesconi. He is a frequent guest at new music festivals such as ECLAT, Klangspuren Schwaz, Festival Musica Strasbourg, Donaueschingen Music Festival and Frankfurt's Cresc..., as well as the multidisciplinary Transart Festival Bolzano.

Pablo Rus Broseta studied composition and saxophone at the conservatoire in his native Valencia, with further studies in conducting in Lyon, and at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Universität der Künste Berlin. He has received invaluable guidance from Bernard Haitink, Pierre Boulez, François-Xavier Roth, David Zinman, Kurt Masur and Steven Sloane.

## Jonathan Davies

bassoon

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British bassoonist Jonathan Davies was appointed Principal Bassoon of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 2016, having previously held the same position with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Jonathan made his BBC Proms debut in 2019 performing Knussen's *Study for 'Metamorphosis'* for solo bassoon, returning in 2020 to perform Anna Meredith's highly virtuosic *Axeman* for solo electric bassoon with the London Sinfonietta. Further solo highlights include Haydn's *Sinfonia Concertante* alongside Maxim Vengerov, and the premiere of David Sawer's *How Among the Frozen Words* for bassoon and choir with the BBC Singers in 2020. Recent solo recordings include Mozart's Bassoon Concerto and *Sinfonia Concertante* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski on the LPO Label, and Poulenc's *Trio for Bassoon, Oboe and Piano* alongside John Roberts and Mark Bebbington. 2021 saw the release of Jonathan's recording of Dutilleux's *Sarabande et Cortège*, newly orchestrated by Kenneth Hesketh and accompanied by the Sinfonia of London and John Wilson, which was subsequently awarded a BBC Music Magazine Award.

Jonathan began his studies in South Wales with Robert Codd. Graduating with HRH Princess Alice The Duchess of Gloucester's Prize, he studied at the Royal Academy of Music under the tuition of John Orford, Amy Harman and David Chatterton, supported generously by the ABRSM and Sir Elton John scholarships. Since 2017, he has been a bassoon Professor and Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

*Jonathan's LPO chair is generously supported by Sir Simon Robey.*

## Alice Ivy-Pemberton

violin

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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.

An avid chamber musician, Alice has collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, Anthony Marwood and Gil Shaham, and performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. 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.

In January 2025, Alice performed Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with the LPO directed by Richard Egarr at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

## Lauren Oakley

dancer

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Lauren most recently finished performing on the *Strictly Come Dancing* Arena Tour, and will next be heading out on the Professionals Tour this summer. She has just completed her fourth series on BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing*, where she was partnered with footballer Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Lauren is from Birmingham and has been dancing since the age of two. She competed internationally in both Ballroom and Latin since the age of seven, and early success led to winning three major international competitions and maintaining the title of British Closed Champion for three years. Lauren's competitive career continued with other highlights, including winning both the prestigious United Kingdom and British Closed Under 21 Ballroom and Latin titles.

She has performed all over the globe with the prestigious 'Burn the Floor' since 2013, touring Australia, Japan, USA, China, South Korea, South Africa and the UK, including a run at Sadler's Wells. She also partnered Kevin Clifton in his 2020 and 2022 UK tours. Lauren regularly assists the show's creatives in concept and choreography for all major touring shows.

Lauren has performed across the UK alongside professional dancers Anton Du Beke and Giovanni Pernice.

She joined the professional dancer line-up on *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2022, and in 2023 was given her first celebrity partner, Krishnan Guru-Murthy, with whom she placed eighth in the competition. In the show's 20th anniversary series, Lauren stepped in to partner JB Gill, taking him all the way to the final.

## Kai Widdrington

dancer

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Kai Widdrington is a professional dancer, choreographer and television personality best known for his captivating performances on BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Born in Southampton in 1995, Kai was initially destined for the football pitch, following in the footsteps of his father, Tommy Widdrington. However, at the age of 12 he chose the sequins over the studs, a decision that rapidly paid off. By age 14, he became a World Junior Latin Champion, proving his natural flair for movement and rhythm.

Since joining *Strictly* in 2021, Kai has become a powerhouse of the franchise. He is a Guinness World Record holder for the most Cha-Cha-Cha time steps in 30 seconds, and has a proven track record as a serial winner, having secured the Christmas Challenge Glitterball twice, and multiple titles on the *Strictly Come Dancing* Live Arena Tour.

Kai's popularity recently culminated in his first solo tour, 'Evolution', which was such a massive success last year that it is returning for a highly anticipated second run in 2026. Known for his old-school Hollywood charm and technical precision, Kai continues to be a leading force in the world of modern ballroom, captivating audiences on both the screen and stage.

# 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 a host of eminent pre-concert speakers (see below), 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](http://lpo.org.uk/harmony-with-nature)

## Nature's voice in tonight's programme

All three of tonight's works connect closely with our season theme, 'Harmony with Nature', each exploring our relationship with the natural world in a different way. John Luther Adams's *Become River* grew directly out of the composer's years living in wilderness landscapes. Rather than telling a story, the music invites us to slow down and experience the steady flow and shifting currents of a river – a reminder of nature's scale, patience, and constant change.

Clarice Assad's *Terra* ('Earth') looks more directly at our responsibility towards the planet. Each movement reflects elements essential to life – air, light and water – in music that celebrates the beauty and fragility of the world around us.

After the interval, Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* brings a different perspective: nature seen through city life. These tango-inspired pieces capture how the changing seasons shape mood, atmosphere and daily experience even in a busy urban landscape.

## The Nature Dialogues

Fascinating free pre-concert talks exploring our season theme, *Harmony with Nature*

Book free tickets online at [lpo.org.uk](http://lpo.org.uk)

Wednesday 8 April 2026  
6pm  
Royal Festival Hall

### Harmony with our Fragile Earth

With scientist Johan Rockström, environmentalist Tony Juniper and composer Anna Thorvaldsdóttir



Friday 17 April 2026  
6pm  
Royal Festival Hall

### Harmony with our Changing Planet

With social scientist Gail Whiteman



## Programme notes

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### John Luther Adams

born 1953

### Become River

2010–14

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© Molly Sheridan

For almost 40 years, composer John Luther Adams made his home in the boreal forest of interior Alaska, where he discovered a unique musical world grounded in space, stillness, and elemental forces. In the 1970s and into the 1980s, he worked full-time as an environmental activist. But the time came when he felt compelled to dedicate himself entirely to music. He made this choice with the belief that, ultimately, music can do more than politics to change the world. Since that time, he has become one of the most widely admired and influential composers in the world, receiving the Pulitzer Prize, a Grammy Award, and many other honours.

In works such as the *Become* trilogy (of which tonight's piece is part), *An Atlas of Deep Time*, and *Canticles of the Holy Wind*, 'JLA' brings the sense of wonder that we feel outdoors into the concert hall. His 'outdoor' works such as *Inuksuit*, *Sila: The Breath of the World*, and *Crossing Open Ground* invite us to remember and reclaim our connections with place, wherever we may be. In January 2024, members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra performed JLA's work *songbirdsongs* at St John's Church, Waterloo.

Now in his 70s, JLA's deep concern for the state of the earth and the future of humanity drives him to continue composing. As he puts it: 'If we can imagine a culture and a society in which we each feel more deeply responsible for our own place in the world, then we just may be able to bring that culture and that society into being.' Since leaving Alaska, JLA and his wife Cynthia have lived in the Sonoran Desert of Mexico, the Atacama Desert of Chile, and the Chihuahuan Desert of New Mexico. They now make their home in the Red Centre of Australia.

*Become River* is one of a trilogy of orchestral works which, the composer claims, 'I never set out to write'. However, *Become Ocean*, written for the Seattle Symphony, became one of the composer's breakout works, winning both the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Music and the 2015 Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. *Become Desert* followed in 2017. Tonight's work, *Become River*, was premiered by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra on 3 April 2014 under conductor Stephen Schick. On *Become River*, John Luther Adams writes: 'Stravinsky remarked that music is the sole domain in which we fully realize the present. Yet so much orchestral music is constantly *becoming* – unfolding in narrative arcs, like novels or movies. Like the lives that most of us lead these days, it's always moving forward, always going somewhere (even if only to the non-places of the internet). It's rare, in our lives and in our music, that we simply stay put and pay attention to where we are, to what is happening around and within us, here and now.

'The pieces of the *Become* trilogy are not symphonic stories about rivers, deserts, or the sea. This is music that aspires to the condition of place. The titles are not 'Becoming ...' – they're 'Become ...'. The invitation is for you, the listener, to enter into the music, to lose yourself, and perhaps to discover oceans, deserts and rivers of your own.

*Continues overleaf*

## Programme notes

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'I've known many rivers in my life – sandy-bottomed blackwater rivers meandering through cypress forests in the Deep South; breathless whitewater rivers carving twisted stone staircases down the Appalachians; the Snake River roaring between the slopes of Hells Canyon; the gentle Chena and the Chatanika, their waters stained like tea, drifting through the spruce forests of interior Alaska; the great Yukon, and its largest tributary, the Tanana, rushing down from the glaciers in channels braided like the intertwined arms of dancers.

'For most of my life, I lived in the sprawling basin of the Tanana. Many times my friends and I floated this river. We came to know certain stretches well – where the best campsites are, where the current picks up at the mouth of a creek, where to watch out for sweepers [fallen trees], how to read the rapids and the shallows in the cold, heavy, grey water. Yet the Tanana, like all

rivers, is ultimately unknowable. It's always changing, always shifting course, carving fresh channels back and forth across the tundra that sweeps a hundred miles to the ever-white peaks of the Alaska Range.

'A musical evocation of the Tanana would have to be a long piece, for a large orchestra. *Become River* is shorter, and scored for a smaller orchestra – an orchestra turned upside down. Rather than their usual position near the edge of the stage, the violins are seated far upstage and elevated. The entire ensemble is raked, from high to low sounds. Over the course of 20 minutes, the music flows downstream in three interlocking streams moving at different tempos, running to the sea.'

*John Luther Adams*

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### Clarice Assad

born 1978

## Terra: Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra

2023 (European premiere)

Jonathan Davies *bassoon*

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1. *Ar (Air)*

2. *Vendaival (Windstorm)*

3. *Victoria Amazonia (Water Lilies)*

4. *Espelho das Águas (Mirror of the Waters)*

5. *Danças da Terra (Dances of the Earth)*

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian-American Clarice Assad is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop and jazz genres, acclaimed for her evocative colours, rich textures and diverse stylistic range. A Grammy Award-nominated composer with more than

70 works to her credit, she has been commissioned by internationally renowned organisations including Carnegie Hall, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Boston Youth Orchestra, Chicago Sinfonietta, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, and the La Jolla Music Festival.

## Programme notes

Her compositions have been recorded by some of the most prominent names in classical music, including percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and oboist Liang Wang. Her music has been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony, Queensland Symphony and Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo. She has served as a Composer-in-Residence for the Albany Symphony, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra. In March 2024, in a FUNharmonics family concert, the London Philharmonic Orchestra gave the European premiere of Assad's *É Goll!*, imagining a day in the life of legendary Brazilian footballer Marta Vieira da Silva, including audience participation and culminating with a football match soundtrack finale.

Also an in-demand performer, Clarice Assad is a celebrated pianist and vocalist who encourages audiences' imaginations to break free of often self-imposed constraints. Her innovative, award-winning

*VOXploration* series on music education, creation and improvisation has been presented throughout the world. Sought-after by artists and organisations worldwide, the multi-talented musician continues to attract new audiences both on and off stage.

*Terra* ('Earth' in Portuguese) was composed for Daniel Matsukawa, Principal Bassoon of The Philadelphia Orchestra, who gave the premiere under Yannick Nézet-Séguin on 12 October 2023. Tonight is its first performance outside of the USA and Brazil. Clarice Assad describes the inspiration for her work: 'Here, the noble and multifaceted bassoon takes centre-stage, and each movement explores the beauty and complexity of the world around us. The air we breathe, the light we need and the water we drink all examine the facets of our existence and the importance of honouring Mother Earth and all its elements, animals, and plants. With each note, I hope we awaken to the need to protect our planet and give back to the graciousness that it bestows upon us.'

### Jonathan Davies on *Terra*

'It'll be a real pleasure to perform with my friends and colleagues. Standing in front of an orchestra is always a bit daunting – especially when you spend 99% of your time on the other side – but I'm really excited to have that experience. *Terra* is a beautiful piece, full of Brazilian folk tunes and jazzy motifs, and unlike any other bassoon concerto I've played. It's also technically challenging, so I'm really looking forward to diving into that side of it too.'

**Get to know Jon: scan the QR code to watch his 'Humans of the Orchestra' video**



© Marcelo Macaue

Interval – 20 minutes

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

# Programme notes

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## Astor Piazzolla

1921–92

### The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

1970 (arr. Leonid Desyatnikov, 1998)

Alice Ivy-Pemberton *violin*

Lauren Oakley & Kai Widdrington *dancers*

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1. *Verano Porteño (Buenos Aires Summer)*
2. *Invierno Porteño (Buenos Aires Winter)*
3. *Primavera Porteña (Buenos Aires Spring)*
4. *Otoño Porteño (Buenos Aires Autumn)*

Vivaldi's Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter were the first four of the 12 concertos in his *The Contest Between Harmony and Invention*, published in 1725. Together they comprise his *Four Seasons*, with virtually every passage describing the events set out in a sonnet accompanying each of the concertos. There are also descriptive directions to the players that are not in the sonnets. This extramusical symbolism did not suit everyone's taste, and the most savage critics were the musicians most opposed to Vivaldian flashiness in the first place.

Two centuries later, the Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla faced another sort of argument about propriety. If the distance of time makes it hard to appreciate Vivaldi's true importance, geographical and cultural distance obscures the position of Piazzolla, who occupies something of a fringe position in the Eurocentric classical world.

Piazzolla was rooted in the world of the tango. Like the tango, he was born in Buenos Aires, and similarly, he quickly went elsewhere, moving with his parents to New York's Little Italy when he was four. In his teens, he returned to Buenos Aires, where he studied composition with the eminent Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera and played the bandoneon, a type of accordion (with buttons instead of keys), in tango orchestras.

Setting out on his own, Piazzolla quickly moved beyond the boundaries of traditional tango. His music expanded the use of dissonance and complex harmony and rhythm, and he incorporated elements picked up from the classical and jazz repertoire. It forsook the dance hall for the concert hall, where his audiences were more likely to be classical or jazz fans than tango aficionados.

And yet Piazzolla's non-tango influences made him a controversial figure among those aficionados. 'I have had enough of people telling me that what I am playing is not tango', he said. One tango purist is said to have threatened him with a gun in the 1950s. Whether coincidentally or not, he left Argentina for Paris in 1954 to study with Nadia Boulanger, who convinced him that he was, after all, a tango composer. He returned from Paris and formed the quintet (violin, bass, piano, guitar and bandoneon) that inspired his best-known works in what he called the 'New Tango' style. Neither fish nor fowl, his music was destined for either the obscurity that befalls work that never finds an audience or the prominence that comes with appealing to multiple audiences that marketers call 'crossover'. Towards the end of his life, Piazzolla's music crossed over in a big way.

*The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, completed in 1970, are themselves fairly well travelled. Like much of his

## Programme notes

music, they have been arranged for a host of different instrumentations: Piazzolla recorded them with his own groups, and other versions include solo guitar and piano trio. The version heard tonight is a fairly free adaptation (by Russian composer Leonid Desyatnikov, arranged for solo violin and orchestra in 1996–98) made with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in mind: The numerous quotations from Vivaldi (sometimes interpolated and sometimes worked into the fabric of the music) are not from Piazzolla's pen. But keep in mind that Piazzolla's own performances of his music were often full of improvisation, so additions or alterations by performers or arrangers can be seen as part of the game.

*Programme note © Howard Posner, courtesy of the LA Philharmonic*

### 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 the survey. Thank you!

# London Philharmonic Orchestra

## After Dark: Tango Landscapes

After tonight's concert | 8.30pm  
Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer

Free to 6.30pm concert ticket-holders

Members of the Orchestra take to the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer for a selection of tango classics from Carlos Gardel to Astor Piazzolla, with a further appearance from dancers Kai Widdrington and Lauren Oakley to bring the dance to life.

**Next After Dark event: 200 Years of ZSL**  
Wednesday 15 April 2026, 9.30pm

Celebrate ZSL's 200th anniversary with a lively late-night performance by the Orchestra's brass and percussion players, following Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals* in the main 7.30pm concert.

[lpo.org.uk](http://lpo.org.uk)





Robin Ticciati



Tan Dun

# London Philharmonic ★ Orchestra

## Voices from Finland

Wed 25 Mar 2026, 7.30pm

Lotta Wennäkoski Zelo  
(world premiere)\*  
Sibelius Kullervo

Robin Ticciati conductor  
Miina-Liisa Väreälä soprano  
Shenyang bass-baritone  
YL Male Voice Choir

\*Commissioned by the London Philharmonic  
Orchestra

## Beethoven's Ninth

Sat 28 Mar 2026, 7.30pm

Tan Dun Choral Concerto: Nine  
(UK premiere)

Beethoven Symphony No. 9

Tan Dun conductor  
Elizabeth Watts soprano  
Hongni Wu mezzo-soprano  
John Findon tenor  
Dingle Yandell bass-baritone  
London Philharmonic Choir  
London Chinese Philharmonic  
Choir



Alina Ibragimova

## Our next Royal Festival Hall concerts

## Pictures at an Exhibition

Wed 1 Apr 2026, 7.30pm

Mark-Anthony Turnage  
Three Screaming Popes  
Bartók Violin Concerto No. 1  
Mussorgsky Pictures at an  
Exhibition

Edward Gardner conductor  
Alina Ibragimova violin

[lpo.org.uk](http://lpo.org.uk)

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