



**Free concert
programme**

London Philharmonic [★] Orchestra



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



**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**
RESIDENT

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 Royal Festival Hall

Friday 31 October 2025 | 7.30pm

A Sea Symphony

Sibelius

Scènes historiques (Suite II) (20')

Sibelius

The Oceanides (10')

Interval (20')

Vaughan Williams

A Sea Symphony (64')

Mark Elder

conductor

Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha

soprano

David Stout

baritone

London Philharmonic Choir

Chorus Director: Madeleine Venner

The London Philharmonic Choir's performance this evening is dedicated to the memory of Jim Wilson.

Part of



The timings shown are not precise and are given only as a guide.
Concert presented by the London Philharmonic Orchestra

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David Stout
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This concert is being recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on Wednesday 12 November 2025 at 7.30pm. It will remain available for 30 days after that on BBC Sounds.

**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**
RESIDENT



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Welcome

LPO news

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.

'The Nature Dialogues' Free pre-concert talks this season

Before tonight's concert, we were joined by biologist and broadcaster Liz Bonnin and oceanographer Helen Czerski for a fascinating conversation about the oceans and their vital role in sustaining life – a perfect prelude to tonight's sea-inspired works by Vaughan Williams and Sibelius.

This event marked the launch of 'The Nature Dialogues' – a series of free pre-concert talks offering fresh perspectives on the music and the season's wider theme, *Harmony with Nature*. Exploring topics from wildlife to volcanoes, stars to storms, guest speakers include Kate Humble and Jeremy Wade, among many other renowned environmentalists, scientists and composers. Turn to page 10 for full details, or find out more and book your free tickets at lpo.org.uk/harmony-with-nature

LPO Friends – Behind-the-scenes

Earlier today, LPO Friends enjoyed exclusive, behind-the-scenes access to a Private Members' Rehearsal with the Orchestra, Choir and conductor Sir Mark Elder, 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! Scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/friends to find out more.

Printed with the planet in mind

The paper used for LPO concert programmes has been sourced from well-managed FSC®-certified forests, recycled materials, and other controlled sources. It is also Carbon Balanced, meaning the carbon impact of its production is offset by the World Land Trust.



Prefer a paper-free option next time?

Scan here for PDF versions of all our programmes to read or download on your phone or tablet.

If you don't want to take your programme home, please use the recycling bins in the Royal Festival Hall foyers. Thank you.



On stage tonight

First Violins

Pieter Schoeman* Leader
Chair supported by Neil Westreich
Alice Ivy-Pemberton
Co-Leader
Kate Oswin
Chair supported by Eric Tomsett
Minn Majoe
Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria Chan
Thomas Eisner
Chair supported by Ryze Power
Katalin Varnagy
Yang Zhang
Beatriz Carbonell
Amanda Smith
Daniel Pukach
Ricky Gore
Alison Strange
Katherine Waller
Caroline Heard
Alice Hall
Tayfun Bomboz

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal
Chair supported by The Candide Trust
Claudia Tarrant-Matthews
Marie-Anne Mairesse
Joseph Maher
Ashley Stevens
Nynke Hijlkema
Nancy Elan
Jessica Coleman
Sioni Williams
Vera Beumer
Sarah Thornett
Kate Cole
Eriko Nagayama
José Nuno Cabrita Matias

Violas

Jane Atkins Guest Principal
Stephanie Block
Laura Vallejo
Lucia Ortiz Saucó
Katharine Leek
Martin Wray
Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden
James Heron

Alistair Scahill
Abby Bowen
Jenny Poyser
Martin Fenn
Jill Valentine

Cellos

Henry Shapard Principal
Wayne Kwon
Chair supported by an anonymous donor
David Lale
Miguel Ángel Villeda Cerón
Francis Bucknall
Sibylle Hentschel
Leo Melvin
Tom Roff
Helen Thomas
Pedro Silva

Double Basses

Kevin Rundell* Principal
Sebastian Pennar*
Co-Principal
Hugh Kluger
George Peniston
Laura Murphy
Chair supported by Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter
Tom Walley
Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton
Elen Roberts
Ben Havinden-Williams

Flutes

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

Piccolo

Stewart McIlwham*
Principal

Oboes

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

Cor Anglais

Sue Böhling* Principal
Chair supported by Dr Barry Grimaldi

Clarinets

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

E-flat Clarinet

Thomas Watmough
Principal
Chair supported by Roger Greenwood

Bass Clarinet

Paul Richards* Principal

Bassoons

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

Contrabassoon

Simon Estell* Principal

Horns

John Ryan* Principal
Annemarie Federle
Principal
Chair supported by Victoria Robey CBE
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

Tuba

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

Timpani

Simon Carrington*
Principal
Chair supported by Victoria Robey CBE
Andrew Barclay*

Percussion

Andrew Barclay* Principal
Chair supported by Gill & Garf Collins
Karen Hutt Co-Principal
Oliver Yates
Oliver Butterworth

Harps

Rosanna Rolton
Guest Principal
Esther Beyer

Organ

Patrick Gowers

**Professor at a London conservatoire*

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

Friends of the Orchestra
Irina Gofman & Mr Rodrik V. G. Cave
Bianca & Stuart Roden

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 share wonder with the modern world through the power of orchestral music, 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. In 2023 we were the most successful orchestra worldwide on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, and 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 some of the greatest historic names like Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In 2021 Edward Gardner became our 13th Principal Conductor, and Vladimir Jurowski became Conductor Emeritus. Karina Canellakis is our current Principal Guest Conductor, and Sir George Benjamin our Composer-in-Residence.

Next generations

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

Pieter Schoeman

Leader

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

Today's young instrumentalists are the orchestra members of the future, and we have a number of opportunities to support their progression. Our LPO Junior Artists programme leads the way in creating pathways into the profession for young artists from under-represented communities, and our LPO Young Composers and Foyle Future Firsts schemes support the next generation of professional musicians, bridging the transition from education to professional careers. We also recently launched the LPO Conducting Fellowship, supporting the development of two 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'll also welcome back Karina Canellakis and Vladimir Jurowski, as well as guest conductors including Robin Ticciati, Kirill Karabits, Mark Elder and Elim Chan. Our lineup of soloists this season includes violinists Anne-Sophie Mutter, Alina Ibragimova, James Ehnes and Himari; cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason; 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.

We're also looking forward to tours to South Korea and across Europe, as well as another season bursting with performances and community events in our Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden residencies.



© 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.

New video series: 'Humans of the Orchestra'

Scan the QR code to watch our interview with Pieter



Sir Mark Elder CH CBE

conductor



© Benjamin Ealovega

Sir Mark Elder was Music Director of the Hallé from 2000–24 and is now Conductor Emeritus. He became Music Director of the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia in September 2025, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in September 2022. He was Music Director of English National Opera (1979–93), Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1982–85) and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (1992–95), and Music Director of Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, USA (1989–94).

Sir Mark's most recent appearance with the London Philharmonic Orchestra was in October 2024, when he conducted a Royal Festival Hall concert that included Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*. In 2023 he conducted the Orchestra in Mahler's Third Symphony, and in 2021 the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* with the LPC, later released on the LPO Label.

He has worked with many of the world's other leading orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw, Budapest Festival and London Symphony orchestras and the Orchestre de Paris, and is a Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has appeared annually at the BBC Proms for many years, including in 1987 and 2006 the Last Night of the Proms, and from 2003 with the Hallé Orchestra. He returned to the BBC Proms in 2025 to conduct Delius's *A Mass of Life* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Chorus and London Philharmonic Choir, and is a regular guest at the Aldeburgh and Edinburgh festivals.

Sir Mark works regularly in the most prominent international opera houses, including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, New York's Metropolitan Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Other engagements have taken him to the Bayreuth Festival (where he was the first English conductor to conduct a new production), Munich, Amsterdam, Zürich, Geneva, Berlin, and the Bregenz and Aix-en-Provence festivals.

From 2011–19 he was Artistic Director of Opera Rara, with whom his recordings included Puccini's *Le Willis* featuring the LPO, as well as Donizetti's *Dom Sebastien*, *Imelda di Lambertazzi*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Maria di Rohan* and a multi-award-winning release of *Les Martyrs*, and Rossini's *Semiramide*.

Sir Mark opened the Met season in New York in 2018 with a new production of *Samson et Dalila*, and returned to Covent Garden in 2022 for a new production of *Peter Grimes*. In 2023 he conducted *Aida* and *La forza del destino* at Covent Garden, and Meyerbeer's *Le prophète* with the LSO at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Sir Mark Elder has made many recordings with the London Philharmonic, Hallé, Royal Concertgebouw, City of Birmingham Symphony and BBC Symphony orchestras, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the orchestras of the Royal Opera House and ENO, in repertoire ranging from Verdi, Strauss and Wagner to contemporary music. His releases on the Hallé's own label have culminated in Gramophone Awards for *The Dream of Gerontius*, *Götterdämmerung* and Elgar's Violin Concerto, and Recording of the Year in the BBC Music Magazine Awards for *The Apostles*.

TV appearances include a two-part film on the life and music of Verdi for the BBC in 1994, and a similar project on Donizetti for German television in 1996. In 2011 he co-presented BBC TV's series *Symphony*, and in 2012 fronted BBC2's TV series *Maestro at the Opera*. He presented a series of TV programmes on BBC4 during the 2015 Proms in which he talked about eight symphonies ranging from Beethoven to MacMillan.

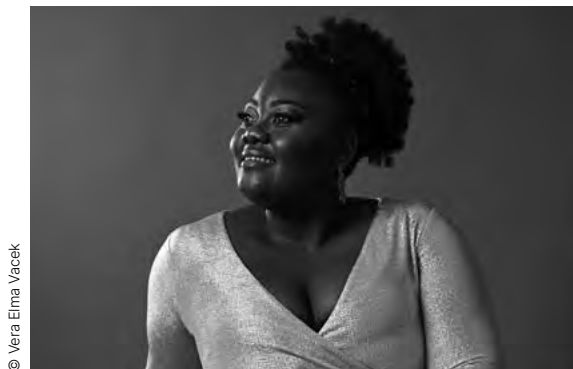
Sir Mark Elder was appointed a Companion of Honour in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours, was knighted in 2008, and awarded the CBE in 1989. He won an Olivier Award in 1991 for his outstanding work at ENO, and in 2006 he was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society. He was awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2011.

Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha

soprano

David Stout

baritone



© Vera Eirna Vacek



© Benjamin Laivega

Rising star Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha won the Song Prize at the 2021 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, and was recently awarded the 2024 Herbert von Karajan Prize at the Salzburg Easter Festival. The South African soprano is also a former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist.

Tonight's concert is Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha's debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This season also sees her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, performing Mahler's Symphony No. 4 under Elim Chan. Other concert highlights include Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with both the Philharmonia Orchestra under Thomas Søndergård and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Kevin John Edusei, and Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland under Jiří Rožeň.

On the opera stage, this season Masabane makes her Metropolitan Opera debut as Liù in Puccini's *Turandot*, a role she will also sing at the Royal Ballet & Opera. Later in the season, she returns to RBO to make her role debut as Contessa Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and performs the same role in concert with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal.

Highlights of last season include Verdi's *Requiem* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra under Jader Bignamini, as well as at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and the Vienna Konzerthaus under Daniel Harding, and at the International May Festival in Wiesbaden under Leo McFall. Masabane also made debuts with the Munich Philharmonic in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9; with the Teatro Regio Torino Orchestra in Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*; and with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra in Strauss's *Four Last Songs*.

David Stout has rapidly established himself as one of the UK's most versatile baritones, with a formidable reputation for not only his vocal prowess, but also his refined acting and charismatic stage presence. Formerly a Senior Chorister at Westminster Abbey, David grew up in southern Africa, which inspired him to read Zoology and go on to teach biology at Epsom College, before studying singing with Rudolf Piernay at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He made his LPO debut in 2019, when he sang Peter in Elgar's *The Apostles* at the Royal Festival Hall under Martyn Brabbins.

David has appeared at leading opera houses such as the Royal Opera House, ENO, WNO, Grange Park Opera, Teatro Massimo di Palermo, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Bregenz Festival, Deutsche Oper am Rhein and the New National Theatre, Tokyo. On the concert stage, he has sung Frank in Puccini's *Edgar* and Renzo in Mascagni's *Silvano* for Scottish Opera; Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Polish National Radio Orchestra; his Concertgebouw debut as The Dark Fiddler in *A Village Romeo and Juliet*; Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* with The English Concert; the title role in *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra; *Messiah* with the Gabrieli Consort; Brahms's *German Requiem* and Elgar's *The Apostles* with the Hallé; Mozart's *Requiem* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; and *Carmina Burana* with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

This season, David returns to Deutsche Oper am Rhein as Mamma Agata in Donizetti's *Prima la Mamma*, and to Grange Park Opera as Alberich in *Das Rheingold*. He also makes his house debut at the Royal Swedish Opera as Figaro in Elena Langer's *Figaro Gets a Divorce*, and appears with the Huddersfield Choral Society in Handel's *Messiah*.

London Philharmonic Choir

Patron HRH Princess Alexandra **President** Sir Mark Elder **Chorus Director Emeritus** Neville Creed
Chorus Director Madeleine Venner **Associate Chorus Director** Victoria Longdon
Guest Associate Chorus Director Bo Wang **Accompanist** Jonathan Beatty
Chair Tessa Bartley **Choir Manager** Natasha Sofia

Founded in 1947 as the chorus for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Choir is widely regarded as one of Britain's finest choirs. For the last seven decades the Choir has performed under leading conductors, consistently meeting with critical acclaim and recording regularly for television and radio.

Enjoying a close relationship with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Choir frequently joins it for concerts in the UK and abroad. Recent concerts with LPO Principal Conductor Edward Gardner have included Rachmaninov's *The Bells* and Mahler's Symphony No. 8. Other highlights have included Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13 with Andrey Boreyko; the UK premiere of James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Choir's President, Sir Mark Elder; and Haydn's *Missa in tempore belli* with Vladimir Jurowski.

The Choir appears annually at the BBC Proms, and performances have included works by John Luther Adams, Beethoven, Busoni, Elgar, Ligeti, Orff, Vaughan Williams and Verdi, not forgetting the greatly enjoyable *Doctor Who* Proms. Last year for the first time, the Choir took part in the 'Films in Concert' series at the Royal Albert Hall, performing the score for *Amadeus*.

A well-travelled choir, it has visited several European countries as well as further afield. The Choir was delighted to travel to the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, in December 2017 to perform Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Choir prides itself on its inclusive culture, achieving first-class performances from its members, who are volunteers from all walks of life.

Tonight marks Madeleine Venner's first concert as the London Philharmonic Choir's Chorus Director.

Supported by **HighQ**

ipc.org.uk



Sopranos

Anna-Maria Achilleos
 Annette Argent
 Chris Banks
 Tessa Bartley
 Hilary Bates
 Holly Beckmyer
 Sarah Bindon
 Amy Brewster
 Valerie Britton
 Charlotte Cantrell
 Paula Chessell
 Jenni Cresswell
 Megan Cunningham
 Sarah Davies
 Antonia Davison
 Shehara de Soysa
 Sarah Deane-Cutler
 Jessica Dixon
 Claudia Finn
 Ella Frost
 Rachel Gibbon
 Rosie Grigalis
 Lily Guenault
 Jane Hanson
 Matilda Hazell
 Sasha Holland
 Roz Horton
 Penny Huang
 Mary Beth Jones
 Ashley Jordan
 Mai Kikkawa
 Joy Lee
 Sarah Leffler
 Iona Lynch
 Janey Maxwell
 Amanda May
 Meg McClure
 Sally Morgan
 Harriet Murray
 Mariana Nina
 Elizabeth Ortiz
 Linda Park
 Marie Power
 Danielle Roman
 Francesca Simon
 Susan Thomas
 Rachel Topham
 Isabella von Holstein
 Sarah Walker
 Rebecca White
 Harriet Wilde
 Lorna Wills
 Sze Ying Chan

Altos

Jenny Burdett
 Andrei Caracoti
 Lara Carim
 Cannis Chan
 Noel Chow
 Liz Cole
 Pat Dixon
 Jennifer Downie
 Olga Duke
 Andrea Easey
 Pauline Finney
 Betha Hanson-Jones
 Mia Hobson
 Kitty Howse
 Gemima Huxtable
 Rosheen Iyer
 Judy Jones
 Suzannah Kewley
 Julia King
 Laura Kirkham
 Andrea Lane
 Ethel Livermore
 Lisa MacDonald
 Laetitia Malan
 Ian Maxwell
 Lottie Mitchell
 Kristen Mooy-Lee
 Anna Mulroney
 Rachel Murray
 Beth O'Brien
 Liudmila Pagis
 Suzannah Peplow-Lipmann
 Nicola Prior
 Elizabeth Reynard
 Carolyn Saunders
 Angela Schmitz
 Rima Sereikiene
 Lily Smith
 Natasha Sofia
 Annette Strzedulla
 Muriel Swijghuisen
 Reigersberg
 Erica Tomlinson
 Catherine Travers
 Susi Underwood
 Jenny Watson
 Rachele Wood

Tenors

Tim Appleby
 Alexander Best
 Christopher Beynon
 Andrew Chavez Kline
 Kevin Cheng

Ollie Clarke
 Gary Cupido
 Robert Geary
 Philippe Gosset
 Iain Handyside
 David Hoare
 Stephen Hodges
 Tom Johnson
 Alex Marshall
 Simon Pickup
 Daisy Rushton
 Chris Stuart
 Don Tallon
 Daniel Tighe
 Claudio Tonini
 Tony Valsamidis
 Mikolaj Walczak
 Emre Yavuz

Basses

Martyn Atkins
 John Bandy
 Jonathon Bird
 Peter Blamire
 Nathan Chu
 Marcus Daniels
 Myrddin Edwards
 Ellie Fayle
 Paul Fincham
 Ian Fletcher
 Gary Freer
 Ian Frost
 John Graham
 Luke Hagerty
 Alan Hardwick
 Mark Hillier
 David Hodgson
 Rylan Holey
 Michael Jenkins
 Nigel Ledgerwood
 John Luff
 Christopher Mackay
 Maurice MacSweeney
 Anthony McDonald
 Max Mitchell
 Tu Nguyen
 Johannes Pieters
 John Salmon
 Joshua Schrijnen
 Gershon Silins
 Henry Stoke
 Peter Taylor
 Alex Thomas
 Oliver Walsh
 Alex Walton-Keeffe
 Sam Watson

In memory of Jim Wilson

The London Philharmonic Choir's performance tonight is dedicated to the memory of Jim Wilson, a cherished member of the Choir since 2002. Jim was both a gifted singer and a kind-hearted spirit who welcomed countless new members with warmth and encouragement during his time as host. Outside the LPC, Jim channelled his deep passion for classical music through his role at Junior Guildhall, inspiring young musicians to develop their talents.

Jim's loss is felt deeply by all who knew and sang beside him. His voice, laugh and kindness will be in our memories for many years to come. Our thoughts are with Tara, Tom and Ella at this sad time. In memory of Jim, the Choir has sponsored a named seat in the bass section of the Royal Festival Hall choir stalls.



Our next concerts with the London Philharmonic Choir

Beethoven & John Adams

including John Adams's *Harmonium*
Saturday 8 November 2025, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall

Edward Gardner conductor
London Philharmonic Choir
BBC Symphony Chorus

The Wooden Prince

including Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*

Saturday 7 February 2026, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall

Edward Gardner conductor
Galina Cheplakova soprano
Agnieszka Rehlis mezzo-soprano
Kostas Smoriginas bass-baritone
London Philharmonic Choir

*Supported by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute

†Please note change of artist

Beethoven's Ninth

including Beethoven's Symphony No. 9
& Tan Dun's *Choral Concerto: Nine* (UK premiere)

Saturday 28 March 2026, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall

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

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 right), 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

'The Nature Dialogues'

Today's leading scientists and storytellers illuminate the natural world in a fascinating series of pre-concert talks. Free and open to all, 'The Nature Dialogues' invite you to delve deeper into the wonders of nature and discover a fresh perspective on this season's music. Book your free tickets at lpo.org.uk

Saturday 29 November 2025 | 6pm

Royal Festival Hall

Harmony with Distant Planets

With composer Robert Laidlow and astronomer David Kipping

Saturday 17 January 2026 | 5pm

Royal Festival Hall

Harmony with the Volcanic World

With broadcaster & writer Kate Humble

Saturday 21 March 2026 | 5pm

Queen Elizabeth Hall

Harmony with our Rivers

With extreme angler, author & broadcaster Jeremy Wade

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

Nature's voice in tonight's programme

Tonight's concert explores two very different perspectives on the sea: Sibelius's powerful depiction of the ocean waves, *The Oceanides*, and Vaughan Williams's epic *A Sea Symphony*. Both works remind us that the sea is more than a backdrop for human endeavour – it is a living force, shaping our imaginations and our destinies. *The Oceanides* offers a vivid portrait of the waves themselves, capturing their mystery and constant motion in music that feels as fluid and unpredictable as the waters it evokes. After the interval, Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* places humanity within this vast seascape: setting poems from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, it uses the sea as a framework for exploring humanity's relationship with nature and the divine.

Programme notes

Jean Sibelius

1865–1957

Scènes historiques (Suite II), Op. 66

1912

1. *Overture: La Chasse (The Hunt)*

2. *Chant d'amour (Love Song)*

3. *Près du pont-levis (At the Drawbridge)*

Sibelius's second set of 'Historical Scenes' appeared in 1912, but as with *Scènes historiques I*, the artistic origins were much earlier. In 1899, Tsarist Russia began a campaign of cultural repression, 'Russification', in Finland but, as so often, this only gave the nationalists a new sense of determination. Ingenious ways were found to slip the message past the censors: for example, the so-called 'Press Pension Celebrations'. On the face of it, these were exactly what they claimed to be: a sequence of lavish theatrical pageants designed to raise money for the pension funds of newspaper employees. But the content was nationalism pure and simple: evocations of important events in Finland's history, along with depictions of its iconic personages, real and legendary. As Finland's star composer, and a declared nationalist, the 34-year-old Sibelius was obviously the man to provide the music.

He provided an overture and orchestral preludes to six scenes, the last of which, 'Finland Awakes', eventually became the hugely popular *Finlandia*, while Nos. 1, 3 and 4 were revised to become the three-movement suite, *Scènes historiques I*. When it came to *Scènes historiques II*, however, the reworking was much more radical, amounting effectively to re-composition. Some of the original 'picturesque' elements survive, but it is perfectly possible to enjoy *Scènes historiques II* as a colourful, compelling mini-symphony.

The exhilarating, life-affirming energy of the Overture, 'La Chasse', is all the more remarkable when one considers that Sibelius's most recent work was the anguished, ultimately desolate Fourth Symphony. The alternations between the horns' calls to action and the racing, galloping passages that follow suggest a thrilling escape into new, bright territory.

'Chant d'amour', which follows, is a Nordic troubadour's song, with the bardic harp taking over the song from the orchestra at the end. The historical-picturesque element is most apparent in the finale, 'Près du pont-levis'. *Pizzicato* violins imitate a guitar, while pairs of woodwinds sing out the dancing main theme. At its height the tempo suddenly drops, the metre changes from four-in-a-bar to three, and the bardic harp returns, leading the music in a sarabande-like dance, punctuated by teasingly hesitant flute solos. A momentary chill (hushed gong strokes and harp *glissandos*), is soon dispelled by the warmly affirmative conclusion.

Programme notes

Jean Sibelius

1865–1957

The Oceanides, Op. 73

1914

The Oceanides is one of Sibelius's most powerful and atmospheric tone-poems, and one of the most vivid evocations of the sea in music. Sibelius composed it in 1914 for performance at the Music Festival at Norfolk, Connecticut. By the end of March, the score was ready to send to America. But soon afterwards Sibelius began work on a radically new version of the piece – effectively a complete re-composition based on some of the old ideas. Sibelius was still working on the revision during the voyage, and there were further corrections after he arrived in America. True or not, it's tempting to infer that the experience changed the character of the music. Before it, Sibelius had never experienced the full power of a vast ocean. The Baltic Sea, which he knew well, is virtually landlocked, tideless and on the whole relatively well behaved. The conductor Osmo Vänskä, who conducted the premiere of the original version, has aptly described it as 'more like a large lake than a mighty ocean'. The revised score, performed here, is a very different matter.

The Oceanides begins with a wonderful musical impression of slowly clearing mists (muted violins) above a gently swelling sea (two sets of timpani), from which the unmistakable cries of seabirds emerge on flutes. Harps and undulating strings – and, later, glockenspiel – present a calm, sometimes sparkling surface, but there are suggestions of huge forces at work in the depths. Gradually the string writing becomes more agitated as elemental chord progressions mount slowly on brass and timpani. These lead to an immense, stormy climax which breaks like a great wave; then we are left with more woodwind bird-calls, and a now uneasy stillness.



Interval – 20 minutes

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

Programme notes

Ralph Vaughan Williams

1872–1958

A Sea Symphony (Symphony No. 1)

1903–09

Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha soprano

David Stout baritone

London Philharmonic Choir

1. *A Song for all Seas, all Ships (Moderato maestoso)*

2. *On the Beach at Night Alone (Largo sostenuto)*

3. *Scherzo: The Waves (Allegro brillante)*

4. *The Explorers (Grave e molto adagio)*



The text begins on page 15.

The premiere of *A Sea Symphony* in 1910 was Ralph Vaughan Williams's breakthrough as a composer. Here he found his voice fully, and at the same time scored his first big public success. Like Brahms, preparing fretfully for his symphonic debut in his forties, Vaughan Williams took a long time over what eventually was to become his official First Symphony. The first sketches date from 1902 when he was 30, but the score wasn't finished until 1909, eight years later. It was a boldly new conception: unlike every choral symphony since Beethoven's *Titanic Ninth*, it was choral in all four movements – Mahler didn't start work on his fully choral Eighth until 1906.

Vaughan Williams's choice of texts was daring, too. The American mystical humanist poet Walt Whitman wasn't well known in Britain at the time, and his intoxicatingly free verses were very different from the kind of metrical poetry preferred by British choral composers. The fluidity of Whitman's writing was a liberating inspiration for Vaughan Williams, freeing him from conventional melodic patterns and encouraging

Programme notes

the kind of long, quasi-improvisatory melodic lines that were to be such a feature of his mature style.

In choosing poetry about the sea, Vaughan Williams was playing to one of his country's great obsessions: the art and literature – even the very language – of this island nation abound in sea imagery. But there is much more to the *Sea Symphony* than musical pictorialism, however striking or seductive. For Whitman, and for the mystically-inclined agnostic Vaughan Williams, the sea also stands for the great unknown: an exciting, alluring, but also perilous dimension, apparently without limit, in which courageous adventurers may discover deep truths about themselves, and may even find transcendent meaning.

After a brief trumpet fanfare and a shout from the chorus, 'Behold, the sea itself,' comes a stunning musical depiction of a huge wave breaking. Later, we hear jaunty hornpipe music, celebrating the often-nameless heroic sailors who have embodied the 'emblem of man elate above death'. Any suggestion of narrow nationalism is quashed by Whitman's insistence (underlined movingly by Vaughan Williams) on hailing the 'separate flags of nations', and by his culminating vision of how the sea unifies all in its elemental, quasi-maternal embrace.

The image of the sea as a mother returns in 'On the Beach at Night Alone', reflected in the almost voluptuous evocation of a calm but powerful sea-swell at the opening. The lonely figure reflecting on the ocean comes to understand that 'a vast similitude interlocks all'. Philosophy is put to one side in the *Scherzo*, 'The Waves', in which Whitman's dazzling word-magic inspires a brilliant display of watery tone-painting from Vaughan Williams himself ('Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling...'; the ship's wake 'flashing and frolicsome under the sun').

The *Sea Symphony's* musical and philosophical weight falls on the finale, the longest of the four movements. Whitman's poem was entitled 'Passage to India', but Vaughan Williams's feelings about British imperialism were far from jingoistic, and it's telling that he chose to universalise the message here with his own title, 'The Explorers'. Here the sea stands for the ultimate existential challenge. What is the world's 'inscrutable purpose', its 'hidden prophetic intention'? For a long time the music is hushed: awe-struck at first, then increasingly troubled. Then a long *crescendo* begins, culminating in the radiant choral vision of 'the poet worthy that name, / The true son of God [who] shall come singing his songs'.

The tempo quickens, and soprano and baritone soloists, half-ecstatic, half-impatient, urge us: 'O we can wait no longer, / We too take ship O soul, / Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas'. To memories of the first movement's rousing hornpipe music the chorus adds its command: 'Sail forth – steer for the deep waters only'. A massive climax is reached, employing the full force of Vaughan Williams's expanded orchestra and the full organ. Then stillness descends; the final outcome remains unknown, but turning back is unthinkable: 'O my brave soul! / O farther, farther sail! / O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?' The calm yet hauntingly inconclusive ending is the most original thing in the entire Symphony: two chords oscillate high on violins, alternating with ambiguous harmonies deep below on cellos and basses. We are a long way from home, either in a tonal or a spiritual sense. 'O farther sail ...'

Programme notes © Stephen Johnson

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Vaughan Williams: A Sea Symphony

Text

1. A Song for all Seas, all Ships

Baritone, soprano, chorus

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, thy ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, thy steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,
See, dusky and undulating, their long pennants of smoke.

Baritone

Today a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships – of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful, like a surge.
Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay.
Picked sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

Soprano

Faunt out O sea your separate flags of nations!
Faunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,
And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old,

Baritone

A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

2. On the Beach at Night Alone

Baritone, chorus

On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future.
A vast similitude interlocks all,
All distances of space however wide,
All distances of time,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different,
All nations, all identities that have existed or may exist,
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spanned,
And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.

Vaughan Williams: A Sea Symphony

Text

3. Scherzo: The Waves

Chorus

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

4. The Explorers

Baritone, soprano, chorus

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thoughts begin to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, with restless explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts,
With that sad incessant refrain – *'Wherefore unsatisfied soul? whither O mocking life?'*

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.
After the seas are all crossed,
After the great captains have accomplished their work,
After the noble inventors,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

Vaughan Williams: A Sea Symphony

Text

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O Soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O Soul,)
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them,
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.
Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;

Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers – haul out – shake out every sail!
Sail forth! steer for the deep waters only!
Reckless, O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave Soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

Walt Whitman (1819–92), from the collection 'Leaves of Grass' (1855)

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Wednesday 5 November 2025

Brahms Tragic Overture
Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1
Brahms Symphony No. 4

Edward Gardner conductor
Pavel Kolesnikov piano

Beethoven & John Adams

Saturday 8 November 2025

Beethoven Violin Concerto
John Adams Harmonium

Edward Gardner conductor
James Ehnes violin
London Philharmonic Choir
BBC Symphony Chorus

Romeo and Juliet

Wednesday 12 November 2025

Gabriela Lena Frank
Contested Eden (*UK premiere*)
Walton Cello Concerto
Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet
(*excerpts*)

Elim Chan conductor
Nicolas Altstaedt cello

Edward Gardner conducts Elgar

Wednesday 26 November 2025

Elgar In the South (Alassio)
Elgar Sea Pictures
Elgar Sospiri
Elgar Enigma Variations

Edward Gardner conductor
Beth Taylor mezzo-soprano

With the generous support of the
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