



**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

Saturday 8 November 2025 | 7.30pm

Beethoven & John Adams

Beethoven

Violin Concerto (42')

Interval (20')

John Adams

Harmonium (35')

Edward Gardner

conductor

Generously supported by Aud Jepsen

James Ehnes

violin

London Philharmonic Choir

Chorus Director: Madeleine Venner

BBC Symphony Chorus

Chorus Director: Neil Ferris

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**SOUTHBANK
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ENGLAND**

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

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.

LPO news

LPO Merchandise – on sale tonight

Did you know we've launched a brand new range of LPO merchandise? From handy tote bags and eco-friendly water bottles to stylish stationery and cosy clothing – all featuring the iconic LPO pink star – it's the perfect way to take a little piece of the Orchestra home with you! With prices from just £2, there's something for every taste and budget.

Check out the merch stall tonight in the Level 2 Foyer, next to the Welcome desk. You can also browse the range and order online at shop.lpo.org.uk



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

As part of our 2025/26 *Harmony with Nature* theme, some of today's leading scientists and storytellers join us throughout the season for a fascinating series of free pre-concert talks. Exploring topics from wildlife to volcanoes, from stars to storms, guest speakers include Kate Humble and Jeremy Wade, among many other renowned environmentalists, scientists and composers.

Find out more and book your free tickets at lpo.org.uk/harmony-with-nature



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On stage tonight

First Violins

Pieter Schoeman* Leader
Chair supported by Neil Westreich
Alice Ivy-Pemberton
Co-Leader
Vesselin Gellef Sub-Leader
Kate Oswin
Chair supported by Eric Tomsett
Lasma Taimina
Chair supported by Irina Gofman & Mr Rodrik V. G. Cave
Minn Majoe
Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria Chan
Yang Zhang
Thomas Eisner
Chair supported by Ryze Power
Katalin Varnagy
Martin Höhmann
Nilufar Alimaksumova
Amanda Smith
Rasa Zukauskaite
Ruth Schulten
Ronald Long
Katherine Waller

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
Sophie Phillips
Chair supported by Friends of the Orchestra
Nynke Hijkema
Marie-Anne Mairesse
Joseph Maher
Sioni Williams
Jessica Coleman
Kate Cole

Violas

Fiona Winning
Guest Principal
Guillaume Leroy
Martin Wray
Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden
Laura Vallejo

Benedetto Pollani

Katharine Leek
Lucia Ortiz Sauco
Jisu Song
Alistair Scahill
Michelle Bruil
Jenny Poyser
Jill Valentine

Cellos

Kristina Blaumane Principal
Chair supported by Bianca & Stuart Roden
Henry Shapard Co-Principal
Wayne Kwon
Chair supported by an anonymous donor
David Lale
Francis Bucknall
Miguel Ángel Villeda Cerón
Hee Yeon Cho
Sue Sutherland
Tom Roff
Sibylle Hentschel

Double Basses

Kevin Rundell* Principal
Sebastian Pennar*
Co-Principal
Hugh Kluger
George Peniston
Tom Walley
Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton
Laura Murphy
Chair supported by Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter
Charlotte Kerbegian
Adam Wynter

Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal
Chair supported by Malcolm & Alison Thwaites
Clare Childs
Stewart McIlwham*
Katherine Bicknell

Piccolos

Stewart McIlwham*
Principal
Katherine Bicknell
Clare Childs

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal
Alice Munday
Chair supported by David & Yi Buckley
Sue Böhling*
Chair supported by Dr Barry Grimaldi

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*
Simon Estell*

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

Tom Nielsen* Principal
Anne McAneney*
Tom Watts
Joe Skypala

Piccolo Trumpet

Tom Nielsen* Principal

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

Percussion

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

Harp

Rachel Masters
Guest Principal

Piano/Synthesiser

Catherine Edwards

Celeste

Philip Moore

Assistant Conductor

Wilson Ng

**Professor at a London conservatoire*

The LPO also acknowledges the following chair supporter whose player is not present at this concert:

The Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

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 Lalovega

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

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

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

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

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

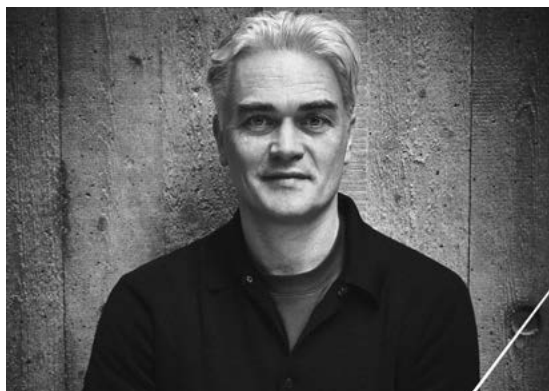
New video series: 'Humans of the Orchestra'

Scan the QR code to watch our interview with Pieter



Edward Gardner

Principal Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Jason Bell

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

This season's LPO highlights include symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Brahms and Rachmaninov; 'Phoenix Lands': two concerts spotlighting 20th-century Central European composers; an evening dedicated to Elgar; and a concert performance of Berg's opera *Wozzeck* to end the season. Last month he and the Orchestra embarked on a tour to South Korea, and December sees a tour of major cities in Germany.

Edward opened his second season as Music Director of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet with *Rusalka* and concert performances of Kurtág's *Fin de partie*. In spring 2026 he will conduct *Don Carlos* and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. June 2026 sees concert performances of Wagner's *The Ring Without Words*, and next season the opera house will begin its journey towards a complete *Ring* Cycle in the 2028/29 season.

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

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

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

In September this year, the LPO Label released Edward's recording of Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir. This was his third Tippett release on the label, following *The Midsummer Marriage* – which won a 2023 Gramophone Award – and the Second Symphony and Piano Concerto with Steven Osborne in 2024. He has also released on the label works by Berlioz, Rachmaninov, Dvořák, Schumann and Britten. Later this month will see the release of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, recorded live at the 2022 BBC Proms (see page 11). In 2024, he and the LPO featured in a Sky Arts series: 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra', which was nominated for a BAFTA.

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

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

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

James Ehnes

violin

© Benjamin Ealovega



James Ehnes has established himself as one of the most sought-after musicians on the international stage. Gifted with a rare combination of stunning virtuosity, serene lyricism and an unfaltering musicality, he is a favourite guest at the world's most celebrated concert halls.

James last appeared with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in October 2024, when he performed Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 2 under Sir Mark Elder here at the Royal Festival Hall. Other recent orchestral highlights include performances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, NHK Symphony, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Cleveland Orchestra.

A devoted chamber musician, James is Artistic Director of the Seattle Chamber Music Society and leader of the Ehnes Quartet. As a recitalist, he performs regularly at Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Symphony Center Chicago, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Verbier Festival, Dresden Music Festival, and Festival de Pâques in Aix-en-Provence. During the 2025/26 season, he will embark on a 50th birthday recital tour in his native Canada, with performances in every province and territory.

James Ehnes has an extensive discography and has won many awards for his recordings, including two Grammys, three Gramophone Awards and eleven Juno Awards, presented by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences – this is the most of any classical musician in history. In 2021 he was recipient of the coveted 'Artist of the Year' title at the Gramophone Awards. This award celebrated his contributions to the recording industry, including the launch of an online

recital series entitled 'Recitals from Home', which was released in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of concert halls. James recorded Bach's six Sonatas and Partitas and Ysaÿe's six Sonatas from his home with state-of-the-art equipment, and released six episodes over a period of two months. These recordings were met with great critical acclaim by audiences worldwide, and the violinist was described by *Le Devoir* as being 'at the absolute forefront of the streaming evolution'.

James Ehnes began violin studies at the age of five, became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin aged nine, and made his orchestral debut with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal aged 13. He continued his studies with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and The Juilliard School, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music upon his graduation in 1997.

James is a Member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Manitoba, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and an honorary fellow of London's Royal Academy of Music, where he is a Visiting Professor. Since 2024, he has been Professor of Violin at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. He plays the 'Marsick' Stradivarius of 1715.

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 Sofla

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 Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* and the UK premiere of James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Choir's President, Sir Mark Elder; Haydn's *Missa in tempore belli* with Vladimir Jurowski; and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13 with Andrey Boreyko.

The Choir appears annually at the BBC Proms, where 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.

lpc.org.uk



Supported by **HighQ**

Sopranos

Annette Argent
Chris Banks
Tessa Bartley
Hilary Bates
Holly Beckmyer
Valerie Britton
Laura Buntine
Helen Cheshire
Jenni Cresswell
Megan Cunningham
Sarah Davies
Shehara de Soysa
Sarah Deane-Cutler
Claudia Finn
Rachel Gibbon
Sofia Gonzalez-Morales
Rosie Grigalis
Jane Hanson
Olivia Haslam
Sasha Holland
Roz Horton
Ashley Jordan
Joy Lee
Sarah Leffler
Ilona Lynch
Janey Maxwell
Amanda May
Meg McClure
Sally Morgan
Harriet Murray
Sarah O'Meara
Linda Park
Alexandra Poncia
Niamh Quinlivan
Courtney Reed
Nicole Rochman
Emma Secher
Francesca Simon
Katie Stuffelbeam
Susan Thomas
Beatrice Tinsley
Rachel Topham
Sarah Walker
Rebecca White
Harriet Wilde
Sze Ying Chan

Altos

Sally Brien
Jenny Burdett
Andrei Caracoti
Cannis Chan
Noel Chow
Liz Cole
Pat Dixon
Olga Duke
Andrea Easey
Sarah Finkemeyer
Pauline Finney
Betha Hanson-Jones
Mia Hobson
Kitty Howse
Matilda Hubble
Judy Jones
Julia King
Borbala Kovacs
Andrea Lane
Ethel Livermore
Laetitia Malan
Ian Maxwell
Lottie Mitchell
Kristen Mooy-Lee
Anna Mulrone
Liudmila Pagis
Rima Sereikiene
Lily Smith
Natasha Sofla
Annette Strzedulla
Muriel Swijghuisen-Reigersberg
Catherine Travers
Susi Underwood

Tenors

Christopher Beynon
Andrew Chavez
Kline
Kevin Cheng
Robert Geary
Alan Glover
Philippe Gosset
David Hoare
Stephen Hodges
Tom Johnson
Edwin Kutas
Alex Marshall
Simon Pickup
Sebastian Rowe
Daisy Rushton
Chris Stuart
Daniel Tighe
Tony Valsamidis
Emre Yavuz

Basses

Jonathon Bird
Peter Blamire
Marcus Daniels
Gary Freer
Ian Frost
Luke Hagerty
Alan Hardwick
David Hodgson
Rylan Holey
Maurice MacSweeney
Anthony McDonald
Max Mitchell
Tu Nguyen
Johannes Pieters
Simon Potter
John Salmon
Joshua Schrijnen
Henry Stoke
Alex Thomas
Geoff Walker
Alex Walton-Keefe
Sam Watson

BBC Symphony Chorus

Chorus Director Neil Ferris **Chorus Deputy Director** Grace Rossiter
Accompanist Paul Webster **Vocal Coach** Carris Jones **Chorus Manager (interim)** Jo Harris

Founded in 1928, the BBC Symphony Chorus is one of the UK's leading choirs. It performs, records and broadcasts a distinctive range of large-scale choral music with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and internationally acclaimed conductors and soloists.

The BBC Symphony Chorus makes regular appearances at the BBC Proms. Performances in the 2025 Proms season with the BBC Symphony Orchestra included Vaughan Williams's *Sancta Civitas* at the First Night of the Proms conducted by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo, and Bliss's *Beatitudes*, also with Oramo, Delius's *The Mass of Life* with Sir Mark Elder, and the Last Night of the Proms conducted by Elim Chan.

Performances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican in the 2025/26 season include Mozart's *Requiem* and Stravinsky's *Perséphone* under Sakari Oramo, Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* conducted by the composer, and Brent Michael Davids's *Requiem for America: Singing for the Invisible People* conducted by Teddy Abrams, part of the BBC Symphony Orchestra's 'Making America' series of concerts in spring 2026.

Most of the Chorus's performances are broadcast on BBC Radio 3, and it has also made a number of commercial recordings, including a Grammy-nominated release of Holst's First Choral Symphony and a Gramophone Award-winning disc of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* conducted by Andrew Davis. Recent releases include premiere recordings of Vaughan Williams's *The Future* and *The Steersman* conducted by Martin Yates and Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* conducted by Davis.

If you are interested in joining the BBC Symphony Chorus, find out more at bbc.co.uk/symphonychorus

Sopranos

Katharine Allenby
Erin Cowburn
Josceline Dunne
Antonia Hamilton
Kuan Hon
Beverley Howard
Elizabeth Howard
Jackie Hunt
Helen Jeffries
Christine Leslie
Sue Lowe
Fizz Margereson
Olivia Middleton
Julia Neate
Rachel Newberry
Ellie Parker
Claire Parry
Nicola Robinson
Ollie Spillane
Magdalena Ulanowicz
Imogen Vining
Esther Wang
Sheila Wood

Altos

Jo Evans
Rosie Hopkins
Pat Howell
Ruth James
Kirsten Johnson
Ellen Kerslake
Tomoko Kigaku
Nicola Lake
Charlotte Senior
Hilary Sillis
Jayne Swindin
Mary Simmonds

Tenors

Justin Althaus
Jefferson Feerick
Stephen Horsman
Simon Lowe
James Murphy
Richard Salmon
Chris Stuart
Orlando Querobino Vas
Leonard Wong

Basses

David Allenby
James Barker
Paul Bodiam
Mark Graver
Richard Green
Andrew Lay
Jonathan Ngai
Philip Rayner
John Russell

Programme notes

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770–1827

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61

1806

James Ehnes *violin*

1. Allegro ma non troppo

2. Larghetto –

3. Rondo: Allegro

By the time Beethoven composed his first – and only – complete concerto for the violin, he was already a master of the instrument. He had under his belt a series of nine sonatas for violin and piano, two solo *Romances* for violin and orchestra, and the start of a youthful Violin Concerto in C major – which would remain unfinished. He had also established himself as a composer of considerable renown: in 1801, he wrote gleefully to his friend Franz Wegeler that when it came to publishers, 'I state my price and they pay.' So it is altogether surprising that the reception at the premiere of his Violin Concerto in D major was lukewarm at best. 'The Concerto enjoyed no great success', wrote his biographer, Anton Schindler. 'It was totally ignored: violinists ... rejected the work as unrewarding.'

It was not until 1844, when the 13-year-old Joseph Joachim resurrected the Concerto under Mendelssohn's direction to 'frenetic applause', that the work became firmly established within the repertoire. By then, tastes had changed, and features that nearly half a century earlier had been regarded as 'risky' and 'disconcerting' were now deemed more acceptable. The mysterious strokes on the timpani with which the Concerto opens would come to seem intriguing, rather than simply bizarre. The Concerto's surprising length – 15 minutes longer than any of Mozart's violin concertos – was now more in keeping with the extended nature of the Romantic concerto. And the dazzling virtuosity of the solo violin part became a real draw for audiences

becoming increasingly accustomed to inspiring and impressive musical feats within the concert hall.

It is worth bearing in mind, though, that Beethoven's Violin Concerto as we know it today is thought to be considerably revised from that of the 1806 premiere. According to Carl Czerny, Beethoven completed the work in haste at the request of Franz Clement, the Concerto's dedicatee and commissioner. Clement wanted a new concerto to perform at a benefit concert in Vienna in December 1806, and reports suggest that the score was barely finished before the first rehearsals began – so much so that Clement was all but sight-reading at the premiere. After its rather lacklustre premiere, the work underwent several revisions before its publication, including its transformation into a concerto for piano, for which Beethoven added an unusual extended cadenza with timpani accompaniment.

Like the knocking of 'Fate' at the start of the Fifth Symphony, the timpani beats with which the work opens form the foundations of the Violin Concerto. These five simple strokes saturate the opening movement, intertwining themselves within the first theme and underpinning the accompaniment of the second, alternating between ominous and celebratory at every turn. This expansive first movement, wrought with dense thematic interplay and dramatic dynamic contrasts, is quite at odds with the stillness of the

Programme notes

central *Larghetto* – a series of ethereal variations in which the soloist appears to extemporise freely over muted strings. This quiet corner of the Concerto has none of the showmanship of the outer movements, with its serene, bird-like utterances seeming to prefigure that of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* by more than a hundred years. The finale, by contrast, is a riot of drama and colour, bursting out of the *Larghetto* without

pause with a pastoral violin melody that is taken up by the orchestra with full force. With every repetition, this simple country theme grows increasingly virtuosic, eventually leading to a climactic coda packed full of exhilarating showmanship.

Programme note © Jo Kirkbride

Interval – 20 minutes

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

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Programme notes

John Adams

born 1947

Harmonium

1980

1. Negative Love

2. Because I could not stop for Death

3. Wild Nights

The texts are on page 14.

Composer, conductor and creative thinker – John Adams occupies a unique position in the world of American music. His works, both operatic and symphonic, stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. Over the past 40 years, Adams's music has played a decisive role in turning the tide of contemporary musical aesthetics away from academic modernism and toward a more expansive, expressive language, entirely characteristic of his New World surroundings.

Born and raised in New England, Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years. He began composing aged ten, and heard his first orchestral pieces performed while still a teenager. The intellectual and artistic traditions of New England, including his studies at Harvard University and attendance at Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts, helped shape him as an artist and thinker. After earning two degrees from Harvard, he moved to California in 1971 and has since lived in the San Francisco Bay area.

Adams taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music for ten years before becoming Composer-in-Residence of the San Francisco Symphony (1982–85), and creator of the orchestra's highly successful and controversial 'New and Unusual Music' series.

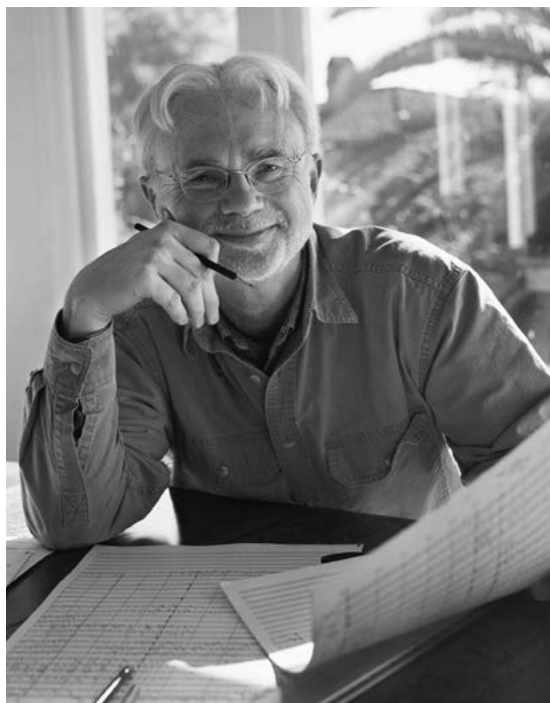
Adams's stage works, most in collaboration with director Peter Sellars, have resulted in more than three decades of groundbreaking operas and oratorios: *Nixon in China* (1987), *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), both to libretti by Alice Goodman, *El Niño* (2000), *Doctor Atomic* (2005), *A Flowering Tree* (2006), *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012), *Girls of the Golden West* (2017) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (2022). Of his first opera, *The New Yorker* magazine said, 'Not since *Porgy and Bess* has an American opera won such universal acclaim as *Nixon in China*. A 2023 *New York Times Arts & Leisure* cover story called Adams 'arguably our greatest living composer'.

Adams's Violin Concerto won the 1993 Grawemeyer Award, and *On the Transmigration of Souls*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to commemorate the first anniversary of 9/11, received the 2003 Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Many of Adams's orchestral works have been premiered by the San Francisco Symphony or Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras, including *Harmonielehre*, *Absolute Jest*, *The Dharma at Big Sur* and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. Tonight's work, *Harmonium*, was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony to celebrate the inaugural season of the Louise M. Davies Hall, and dedicated to conductor Edo de Waart, who suggested the piece and who led its first performance on 15 April 1981.

Programme notes

In the composer's words: John Adams on *Harmonium*



© Deborah O'Grady

'Harmonium (1980) and *Shaker Loops* (1978) represent my first mature statements in a language that was born out of my initial exposure to Minimalism. From the very start, my own brand of Minimalism began to push the envelope. What was orderly and patiently evolving in the works of Reich or Glass was in my works already subject to violent changes in gesture and mood. In *Shaker Loops*, for example, I utilised the repetitive techniques that Terry Riley first proposed in his ensemble piece *In C*. But rather than set up small engines of motivic materials and let them run free in a kind of random play of counterpoint, I used the fabric of continually repeating cells to forge large architectonic shapes, creating a web of activity that, even within the course of a single movement, was more detailed, more varied, and knew both light and dark, serenity and turbulence.

'Harmonium was composed in 1980 in a small studio on the third floor of an old Victorian house in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Those of my friends who knew both the room and the piece of music were

amused that a piece of such spaciousness should emerge from such cramped quarters. The title of the work was all that survived from my initial intention to set poems from Wallace Stevens's collection of the same name. After I realised that Stevens's language and rhythmic sense was not my own, I cast far and wide for a text to satisfy a musical image that I had in mind. That image was one of human voices – many of them – riding upon waves of rippling sound. Ultimately I settled on three poems of transcendental vision. *Negative Love* by John Donne examines the qualities of various forms of love, ascending in the manner of Plato's *Symposium*, from the carnal to the divine. I viewed this "ascent" as a kind of vector, having both velocity and direction. Musically, this meant a formal shape that began with a single, pulsing note (a D above middle C) that, by the process of accretion, becomes a tone cluster, then a chord, and eventually a huge, calmly rippling current of sound that takes on energy and mass until it eventually crests on an immense cataract of sound some ten minutes later. To date, I still consider *Negative Love* one of the most satisfying architectural experiments in all my work.

'The two Emily Dickinson poems show the polar opposites of her poetic voice. "Because I could not stop for Death" is the intimate, hushed Dickinson, whose beyond-the-grave monologue is a sequence of images from a short life, a kind of pastoral elegy expressed through the lens of a slow-motion camera.

'Following the last palpitations of the slow movement, the music enters a transition section, a kind of bardo stage between the end of one life and the beginning of a new one. Again, as in "Negative Love", the music gradually assumes weight, force and speed until it is hurled headlong into the bright, vibrant clangour of "Wild Nights". Here is the other side of Emily Dickinson, saturated with an intoxicated, ecstatic, pressing urge to dissolve herself in some private and unknowable union of eros and death. The metaphors, at once violent and sexually hypercharged, play upon the image of a "heart in port", secure and out of danger from the wild storm-tossed sea. So much has been written about Emily Dickinson, and her mysterious persona has been subjected to so much speculative analysis, that it is always a shock to encounter these texts alone and away from any kind of exegesis.'

© John Adams

John Adams: Harmonium

Texts

1. Negative Love

I never stoop'd so low, as they
Which on an eye, cheek, lip can prey.
Seldom to them, which soar no higher
Than virtue or the mind to admire.
For sense, and understanding may
Know what gives fuel to their fire:
My love, though silly, is more brave,
For may I miss, when'er I crave,
If I know yet, what I would have.

If that be simply perfectest
Which can by no way be express'd
But Negatives, my love is so.
To All, which all love, I say no.
If any who deciphers best,
What we know not, our selves, can know,
Let him teach me that nothing; this
As yet my ease and comfort is,
Though I speed not, I cannot miss.

John Donne (1572–1631)

2. Because I could not stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground:
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Emily Dickinson (1830–86)

3. Wild Nights

Wild Nights – Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our Luxury!

Futile – the winds –
To a Heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –
Ah, the sea!
Might I but moor – Tonight –
In thee!

Emily Dickinson (1830–86)

Video: Edward Gardner on *Harmonium*

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