



**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 Royal Festival Hall

Saturday 28 March 2026 | 7.30pm

Beethoven's Ninth

Tan Dun

Choral Concerto: Nine (*UK premiere*) (25')

Interval (20')

Beethoven

Symphony No. 9 (67')

Tan Dun conductor

Elizabeth Watts soprano

Hongni Wu mezzo-soprano

John Findon tenor

Matthew Rose bass*

London Philharmonic Choir

Chorus Director: Madeleine Venner

London Chinese Philharmonic Choir

Artistic Director: Bo Wang

*Unfortunately, due to illness, Dingle Yandell has had to withdraw from this performance. We're delighted that Matthew Rose has agreed to step in at short notice.

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

Tonight in 2 minutes

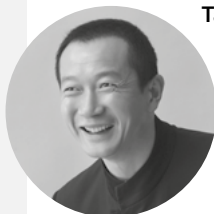
New to classical? Short on time? Your quick guide to tonight's concert.

The vibe

Beethoven's Ninth

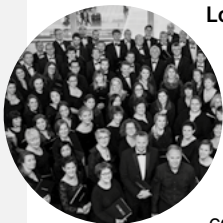
Two big works in one concert. Tonight opens with Tan Dun's Choral Concerto *Nine* – the first time it's ever been performed in the UK. And after the interval comes Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, famous for its uplifting 'Ode to Joy' finale, bringing orchestra and choirs together in an epic, celebratory close.

Who's on stage?



Tan Dun – conductor

Tan Dun is a Chinese-born American composer and conductor, best known for composing the score for the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. He has two roles tonight – he's conducting the concert, and he also composed the first work, *Nine*.



London Philharmonic Choir London Chinese Philharmonic Choir

Tonight, two choirs come together for extra scale and impact. The London Chinese Philharmonic Choir adds particular insight and authenticity to Tan Dun's music, while together, the two ensembles combine to create a powerful sound.

Turn to pages 10 & 11 for full chorus lists.



Elizabeth Watts, Hongni Wu, John Findon & Matthew Rose

Four star solo singers will join the stage for the finale of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9: the famous 'Ode to Joy'.



London Philharmonic Orchestra

Tonight there are over 100 LPO musicians on stage. Many of our talented players enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral roles.

Turn to page 6 for a full player list.

What to expect

Take your seats...

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



25 min

Tan Dun

Choral Concerto: Nine

Composer Tan Dun is best known for his film score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Much of his music explores the connections between Eastern and Western traditions, blending cultural influences and philosophies from both worlds. Written to be performed alongside Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, *Nine* combines ancient Chinese poetry and striking modern orchestral colours. Its three movements sometimes use wordless vocal sounds for atmosphere rather than literal meaning. This is the first time the work has ever been performed in the UK – so tonight is history in the making!

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



67 min

Interval 20 min

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 9

One of the most famous symphonies ever written, Beethoven's Ninth broke new ground by adding a chorus and solo singers to the standard symphonic form. Its final movement sets Schiller's poem 'Ode to Joy', a vision of shared humanity that has made the piece a global symbol of unity and hope – often performed at major public occasions and celebrations. From its mysterious opening to the blazing choral finale, 'Beethoven's Ninth' remains a work of huge emotional sweep and lasting cultural impact.

After the final piece, we applaud the performers. The conductor will acknowledge tonight's soloists and choirs, and the Leader (chief First Violin), Pieter. He might also highlight other players for particular appreciation and applause, with several rounds of bows bringing the evening to a celebratory close.

Want to read more? Turn to page 12 for a deeper dive into this evening's pieces, or to follow along with the sung texts.

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.

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LPO news

New LPO Chief Conductor announced: Paavo Järvi

You may already have seen the exciting news that **Paavo Järvi** will become Chief Conductor & Artistic Advisor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra from the 2028/29 season.

One of the most respected and sought-after conductors of his generation, Järvi will succeed current Principal Conductor Edward Gardner at the end of his tenure. As the Orchestra looks to the future, this appointment brings a conductor renowned for his compelling interpretations of the symphonic repertoire and his advocacy for new music, as well as an artistic ethos that perfectly aligns with the LPO's commitment to innovative, forward-thinking programming. Just as importantly, he and the Orchestra share a deep commitment to nurturing the next generation of artists.

LPO Chief Executive David Burke recalls: 'From the first time I worked with Paavo in 2023, it was obvious that the chemistry between this exceptional conductor and the LPO was something very special.' Jesús Herrera, LPO Artistic Director, adds: 'We're thrilled to welcome Paavo Järvi to the LPO family. He is a remarkable maestro whose artistic brilliance and deep humanity perfectly embody our orchestra's values.'

Järvi's Royal Festival Hall concert of Tchaikovsky and Sibelius earlier this month received high praise from press and audience members alike, with a chorus of 5-star reviews, and we look forward to welcoming him back to conduct the Orchestra next season, before his tenure officially begins in 2028.

Read the full announcement at lpo.org.uk/news



Paavo Järvi (centre), with LPO Chief Executive David Burke and Artistic Director Jesús Herrera, 3 March 2026

London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Jason Bell

Uniquely groundbreaking and exhilarating to watch and hear, the London Philharmonic Orchestra has been celebrated as one of the world's great orchestras since Sir Thomas Beecham founded it in 1932. Our mission is to create unrivalled orchestral experiences on stage and cultivate human connections beyond it, which we accomplish through live performances, online, and an extensive education and community programme, cementing our position as a leading orchestra for the 21st century.

Our home is at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, where we're at the beating heart of London's cultural life. You'll also find us at our resident venues in Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden, and on tour worldwide. In 2024 we celebrated 60 years as Resident Symphony Orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, combining the magic of opera with Glyndebourne's glorious setting in the Sussex countryside.

Soundtrack to key moments

Everyone will have heard the Grammy-nominated London Philharmonic Orchestra, whether it's playing the world's National Anthems for every medal ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, our iconic recording with Pavarotti that made *Nessun Dorma* a global football anthem, or closing the flotilla at The Queen's Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. And you'll almost certainly have heard us on the soundtracks for major films including *The Lord of the Rings*.

Sharing the wonder worldwide

We're one of the world's most-streamed orchestras, with over 15 million plays of our content each month. We're the most followed UK orchestra on Instagram, the most followed orchestra globally on TikTok, and overall the third most followed globally across all social platforms. In 2024 we featured in a TV documentary series on Sky Arts: 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra', which was nominated for a 2025 BAFTA. During 2025/26 we're once again working with Marquee TV to broadcast selected live concerts to enjoy at home.

Our conductors

Our Principal Conductors have included great historic names like Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In 2021 Edward Gardner became our 13th Principal Conductor, and Vladimir Jurowski became Conductor Emeritus. Karina Canellakis is our current Principal Guest Conductor, and Sir George Benjamin our Composer-in-Residence.

Next generations

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

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 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.



© 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



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

Lasma Taimina

Chair supported by Irina Gofman & Mr Rodrik V. G. Cave

Minn Majoe

Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria Chan

Katalin Varnagy

Vera Beumer

Thomas Eisner

Ronald Long

Daniel Pukach

Camille Buitenhuis

Alice Apreda Howell

Rebecca Dinning

Tayfun Bomboz

Grace Lee

Rasa Zukauskaite

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal

Chair supported by The Candide Trust

Emma Oldfield Co-Principal

Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Coco Inman

Nynke Hijlkema

Joseph Maher

Nancy Elan

Marie-Anne Mairesse

Sophie Phillips

Chair supported by Friends of the Orchestra

Ashley Stevens

Kate Birchall

Sioni Williams

Sheila Law

Anna Croad

Violas

Jane Atkins Guest Principal

David BaMaung

Benedetto Pollani

Martin Wray

Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden

Laura Vallejo

Lucia Ortiz Saucó

James Heron

Shiry Rashkovsky

Raquel López Bolívar

Richard Cookson

Kate De Campos

Jisu Song

Cellos

Henry Shapard Principal

Leo Melvin

Helen Thomas

Rasmus Støier Andersen

Julia Morneweg

Andrea Kim

Alba Merchant

Deni Teo

Francis Bucknall

Michael Wigram

Double Basses

Kevin Rundell* Principal

Hugh Kluger

Tom Walley

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Tom Morgan

Aiyana Rennie

Phoebe Cheng

Jeremy Watt

Ben Wolstenholme

Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal

Chair supported by Malcolm & Alison Thwaites

Hannah Grayson

Daniel Shao

Katherine Bicknell

Piccolo

Katherine Bicknell

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal

Alice Munday

Chair supported by David & Yi Buckley

Ilid Jones

Jack Tostevin-Hall

Clarinets

Thomas Watmough

Principal

Chair supported by Roger Greenwood

James Maltby

Paul Richards*

Bethany Crouch

Bassoons

Jonathan Davies* Principal

Chair supported by Sir Simon Robey

Helen Storey*

Lorna West

Simon Estell*

Contrabassoon

Simon Estell* Principal

Horns

John Ryan* Principal

Martin Hobbs

Mark Vines Co-Principal

Flora Bain

Duncan Fuller

Trumpets

Tom Nielsen* Principal

Anne McAneney*

David Hilton

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

Oliver Yates

Jeremy Cornes

**Professor at a London conservatoire*

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

An anonymous donor
Sir Nigel Boardman & Prof. Lynda Gratton
Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter
Dr Barry Grimaldi
Bianca & Stuart Roden
The Thompson Family Charitable Trust
The Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

Tan Dun

composer | conductor



© Feng Hai

The world-renowned artist and UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador Tan Dun has made an indelible mark on the world's music scene, with a creative repertoire that spans the boundaries of classical music, multimedia performance, and Eastern and Western traditions. He is the recipient of today's most prestigious honours including the Grammy Award, Academy Award, Bach Prize, Grawemeyer Award, Shostakovich Award, Italy's Golden Lion Award for Lifetime Achievement and the Istanbul Music Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2019, he was named Dean of the Bard College Conservatory of Music in New York State.

Tan Dun's music has been performed worldwide by leading orchestras, opera houses, international festivals, and on radio and television. In January 2023 the London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir, together with the London Chinese Philharmonic Choir, gave the UK premiere of his *Buddha Passion* here at the Royal Festival Hall under the composer's baton.

As a conductor of innovative programmes, Tan Dun's 2025/26 season includes appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Germany.

Tan Dun is an Artistic Ambassador of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and serves as Honorary Artistic Director of the China National Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of the Shenzhen Symphony, and Honorary Artistic Director & Chief Guest Conductor of the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra. He has also led many of the world's most esteemed orchestras including

the London Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala and Sydney Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Tan Dun's individual voice has been heard widely by international audiences. His first *Internet Symphony*, which was commissioned by Google/YouTube, has reached over 23 million people online. His 'Organic Music Trilogy' of *Water*, *Paper* and *Ceramic* has frequented major concert halls and festivals. The *Paper Concerto* was premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the opening of the Walt Disney Hall. His multimedia work *The Map*, premiered by cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, has toured more than 30 countries worldwide, and its manuscript is now preserved in the Carnegie Hall Composers Gallery. His *Orchestral Theatre IV: The Gate* was premiered by Japan's NHK Symphony Orchestra and crosses the cultural boundaries of Peking Opera, Western opera, and puppet theatre traditions. In 2018 Tan Dun conducted the premiere of his epic oratorio *Buddha Passion* at the Dresden Festival with the Munich Philharmonic. It has since been performed in several countries, including the UK premiere given by the LPO in 2023.

Tan Dun records for Sony Classical, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, Opus Arte, BIS and Naxos. His recordings have garnered many accolades, including a Grammy Award (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) and nominations (*The First Emperor*; *Marco Polo*; *Pipa Concerto*), Japan's Recording Academy Awards for Best Contemporary Music CD (*Water Passion after St. Matthew*) and the BBC's Best Orchestral Album (*Death and Fire*).

Elizabeth Watts

soprano



© Marco Borggreve

With a voice described by *International Record Review* as 'one of the most beautiful Britain has produced in a generation', Elizabeth Watts is 'established as one of Britain's leading sopranos' (*The Guardian*) and 'a national treasure' (*The Arts Desk*). Her debut recording of Schubert Lieder for Sony Red Seal, a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice, was praised for its 'milky timbre and interpretative maturity' (*FT*) and 'technical mastery' (*Gramophone*). Her recordings include Bach cantatas, Strauss Lieder, Mozart opera arias, Bach's St John and St Matthew *Passions*, and Mahler's Symphony No. 4. Her recording of Britten's *Spring Symphony* with Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra was named Orchestral Album of the Year by *Classica*.

A former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, Elizabeth has appeared at Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and the Edinburgh Festival, and in Paris, Madrid and Zürich.

On the concert platform, Elizabeth sings a broad repertoire from Bach to Brahms, Mahler and Strauss, and has appeared with orchestras including the London Symphony, BBC Symphony, Netherlands Philharmonic and Gothenburg Symphony orchestras, with conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sakari Oramo and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. With the LPO, she sang Elgar's *The Apostles* under Martyn Brabbins in 2019, and Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle* under Gustavo Gimeno in 2018, both at the Royal Festival Hall.

Recent operatic roles include Aspasia (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*, Garsington Opera) and the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*, ENO). She studied at Sheffield University and the Royal College of Music. Her awards include the Kathleen Ferrier Award and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award.

Hongni Wu

mezzo-soprano



A former member of the Royal Ballet & Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, Hongni Wu has since returned to Covent Garden as Kuchtik (*Rusalka*) under Semyon Bychkov, Siébel (*Faust*) under Maurizio Benini, and Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) under Kevin John Edusei.

Further highlights include Angelina (*La Cenerentola*) at Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova, Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at Opera Theater of Saint Louis and the Macau International Music Festival, Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Santa Fe Opera, Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) at Pacific Opera Victoria, Farnace (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*) and Der Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at Opéra National de Montpellier, Kuchtik at Opéra Royal de Wallonie, and Suzuki at the Royal Danish Opera. She performed Comrade Chin/Shu Fung in the world premiere of Huang Ruo's *M. Butterfly* at Santa Fe Opera, and Bao Chai in *Dream of the Red Chamber* at San Francisco Opera.

This season, Hongni performs Linea in the world premiere of Marc Blitzstein's *Parabola and Circula* with Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, Cherubino at Opera North, and returns to San Francisco Opera as Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Crab General/Venus Star in the world premiere of Huang Ruo's *The Monkey King*.

In concert, Hongni has performed Handel and Cherubini arias at the Cologne Philharmonie with Ensemble Resonanz and Riccardo Minasi, Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with Paavo Järvi and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and Tan Dun's *Buddha Passion* with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. Upcoming highlights include Ravel's *Shéhérazade* with the Chinese National Symphony Orchestra under Lan Shui. Tonight is her LPO debut.

John Findon

tenor



© Bertie Watson

British tenor John Findon has earned high praise for his recent performances from critics at home and abroad. His 'glamorous tone' (*Bachtrack*), 'heroic sound' (*The Observer*) and 'imposing stage presence' (*London Unattached*) combine to create what *Opera Gazet* describes as a 'rare type of tenor.'

This season John joins the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra for Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for Berlioz's *Requiem*. He recently made debuts with the London Symphony Orchestra in a concert setting of Strauss's *Salome* under Sir Antonio Pappano, and with the Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* under Cristian Măcelaru, and debuted the role of Zinovy in a concert performance of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* at the 2025 BBC Proms with the BBC Philharmonic under John Storgårds.

On the opera stage, this season sees John make his US debut at Des Moines Metro Opera as Lennie Small in Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*. In autumn 2025 he returned to English National Opera as Don José in *Carmen*, and earlier this year he sang the title role in a tour of *Peter Grimes* with Opera North. Later this spring he will cover the same role in Deborah Warner's production at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

John Findon studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and on the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He was a Harewood Artist at English National Opera from 2022–24 and a Jerwood Young Artist at Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2017.

Matthew Rose

bass



© Lena Kern

British bass Matthew Rose studied at the Curtis Institute of Music before becoming a member of the Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Matthew's international career has seen him enjoy a close relationship with New York's Metropolitan Opera, for whom he gave his 100th performance in 2022. His roles there include Philip II and Monk (*Don Carlos*), Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Claudio (*Agrippina*), Masetto and Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Oroveso (*Norma*), Ashby (*La Fanciulla del West*), Talbot (*Maria Stuarda*), Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Night Watchman (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Frère Laurent (*Roméo et Juliette*) and Colline (*La bohème*).

Matthew is a regular guest with the LPO at the Royal Festival Hall, appearing most recently in April 2025 as soloist in Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*. In May 2023, he sang Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* under Edward Gardner, and in December 2020 Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* under Vladimir Jurowski, which was later released on the LPO Label. Previous engagements with the Orchestra include Fasolt in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, both also under Jurowski.

The 2025/26 season includes Matthew's return to Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* – both as Sarastro in the Metropolitan Opera's beloved Holiday Presentation, and as the Speaker of the House for the Royal Ballet & Opera in London. Matthew also performs in Seattle Opera's concert performances of *Daphne* as Peneios and with Sir Mark Elder in *L'enfance du Christ* at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia. This summer, he returns to Grange Park Opera for the roles of Fasolt (*Das Rheingold*) and Philip II (*Don Carlos*).

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 **Language Coach** Norbert Meyn
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 Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, John Adams's *Harmonium*, 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. In 2024 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



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Sopranos

Annette Argent
Chris Banks
Tessa Bartley
Hilary Bates
Holly Beckmyer
Valerie Britton
Laura Buntine
Charlotte Cantrell
Dawn Chamberlain
Jenni Cresswell
Antonia Davison
Arati Fernandes
Claudia Finn
Rachel Gibbon
Monica Griesemer
Rosie Grigalis
Jane Hanson
Sasha Holland
Roz Horton
Mary Beth Jones
Ashley Jordan
Mai Kikkawa
Sarah Leffler
Meg McClure
Sally Morgan
Harriet Murray
Ella Pickering-Paterson
Ruby Prescott-Mason
Nicole Rochman
Lucia Ruiz Vila
Emma Secher
Francesca Simon
Katie Stuffelbeam
Susan Thomas
Isabella von Holstein
Sarah Walker
Rebecca White
Harriet Wilde

Altos

Charlotte Addy
Jenny Burdett
Andrei Caracoti
Cannis Chan
Noel Chow
Liz Cole
Jill Creighton
Pat Dixon
Olga Duke
Andrea Easey
Betha Hanson-Jones
Mia Hobson
Jemima Huxtable
Rosheen Iyer
Suzannah Kewley
Julia King
Laura Kirkham
Andrea Lane
Ethel Livermore
Laetitia Malan
Ian Maxwell
Kristen Mooy-Lee
Liudmila Pagis
Nicola Prior
Rima Sereikiene
Natasha Sofia
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London Chinese Philharmonic Choir

Artistic Director Bo Wang **Chairs** Sarah Tang & Wenli Song **Accompanist** Peichao Liao



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The London Chinese Philharmonic Choir was founded in 2013 by composer Yee Cheung Hui and Artistic Director Bo Wang. Bringing together singers of British, Chinese, Malaysian and Singaporean backgrounds, the Choir performs in both English and Mandarin, reflecting its commitment to musical dialogue across cultures. Since its formation, it has grown into one of the UK's leading amateur Chinese artistic ensembles. Under Bo Wang's direction, the Choir focuses on expressive musical storytelling, balancing technical discipline with a warm and collaborative spirit.

The Choir's mission is to cultivate high-level choral skills among amateur singers while exploring a wide range of Western and Chinese classical and contemporary repertoire. Alongside concert performances, it remains dedicated to charitable and community projects, guided by the belief that music can transcend language and bring people together. Through its work, the Choir seeks to introduce Chinese musical heritage to UK audiences while fostering meaningful artistic exchange between East and West.

Highlights from past seasons include the UK premiere of Xian Xinghai's *Yellow River Cantata*, appearances at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall for the International Chinese Film Festival, and performances at Cadogan Hall and Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre. The Choir has also taken part in international choral festivals and numerous fundraising concerts, supporting organisations such as St Christopher's Hospice and Helen & Douglas House.

In January 2023, the Choir joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Choir for the UK premiere of Tan Dun's *Buddha Passion*, marking an important milestone and deepening its ongoing engagement with large-scale symphonic and cross-cultural repertoire.

Sopranos

Qiuyan Liu
Lucia Antonelli Jin
Holly Shao
Lina Zhen
Haiwen Xue
Nancy Kau
Min Li
Hongyang Fu
Zhuqun Wang
Shilin Yao

Altos

Meiyang He
Siuling Young
Xiaoming Liu
Bing Tao
Nan Zhang
Manxia Gao
Lifang Li
Jinping Wang
Luhong Zhu
Wen Xing

Wen Yao
Lisa Wang
Guilin Li
Luqin Geng
Xin Tong
Xuan He

Tenors

Dong Shi
Weidong Huang
William Sing Lam Ng
Chengming Li
Ziqi Zheng
Zhiqiang Xia
Zhixiang Yuan
Qinjian Yang
Shilin Xu
Peipei Ming

Basses

Yuan Zou
Yee Cheung Hui

Programme notes

Tan Dun

born 1957

Choral Concerto: Nine

2020–24 (UK premiere)

London Philharmonic Choir

London Chinese Philharmonic Choir

1. *Nine*

2. *Wine*

3. *Time*

The texts are on page 14.

In many of his compositions, including *Choral Concerto: Nine*, Tan Dun explores the intersection between East and West, which seems only natural given his background and education. He was born in China's Hunan Province and studied at the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, before moving to New York City and earning a doctorate at Columbia University. Armed with expertise in both Chinese music and the Western classical tradition, he began to pursue projects around the world.

Some pieces not only imaginatively combine musical traditions but also explore new sonic realms through technology. Tan Dun's *2000 Today: A World Symphony for the Millennium* was broadcast internationally on New Year's Day in 2000, and his *Internet Symphony* (2009) – commissioned by Google and YouTube – has been heard by many millions online. His evocative score for Ang Lee's film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) won an Academy Award as well as a Grammy. Tan Dun has also written operas, including *Nine Songs* (1989); *Marco Polo* (1995); *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* (2002); *The First Emperor*, which premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in 2006; and *Buddha Passion* (2018), of which the LPO gave the UK premiere at the Royal Festival Hall in January 2023, under the composer's baton.

Tan Dun's accomplishments have been honoured with a wide array of prestigious recognitions, including the Grawemeyer Award in 1998. In 2003 he was named *Musical America's* Composer of the Year, and a decade later added the title of Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO in an inauguration at the organisation's Paris headquarters on World Water Day.

Choral Concerto: Nine was commissioned jointly by BTHVN 2020 Beethoven Jubiläums Gesellschaft gGmbH, the Royal Philharmonic Society, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and DEUTSCHER MUSIKRAT gGmbH, with support by Deutsche Welle. It was the Royal Philharmonic Society, here in the UK, who first commissioned Beethoven to write his Ninth Symphony, and the RPS was pleased to pay a part in commissioning this new work by Tan Dun. The commission was planned to mark the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth in 2020; however, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the premiere. This led Tan Dun to expand his original concept into the three-movement work we hear today. He scored it for the same vocal, choral and orchestral forces that Beethoven used in his Ninth Symphony, and the two pieces are meant to be programmed together. As it turned out, *Nine* premiered in 2024, the 200th

Programme notes

anniversary of the premiere of Beethoven's Ninth, in Weikersheim. This small town in south-central Germany was the site of a summer festival in which nearly 200 musicians – ages 17 to 27, and from 41 countries – participated. After the premiere, Tan Dun and the young musicians took the work on a tour across Europe. Tonight's concert is its first UK performance, and will be followed by a second performance tomorrow at Symphony Hall in Birmingham.

Tan Dun decided to create a dialogue between East and West not just on a musical level but also on a textual one. He juxtaposes ancient texts drawn from three Chinese poets in the Taoist and Buddhist traditions with the famous words of Friedrich Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' that Beethoven uses in the last movement of his Symphony. In addition, some words are only sounds: 'Empty words, no meaning,' as marked in the score. The movements are titled 'Nine', 'Wine' and 'Time' – all of which in Chinese are *Jiu*.

The first movement is an allusion to the mysterious falling fifths that open Beethoven's Symphony. The fast second movement has the feel of a *scherzo* and prominently features timpani, as Beethoven does in his *scherzo*. The final movement has a section marked 'jazz style', which might be considered Tan Dun's contemporary take on the 'Turkish' march Beethoven includes in his last movement. Tan Dun himself notes the following:

'At the very beginning of the 'Ode to Joy' in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Friedrich Schiller's words proclaim that all people are brothers and all creatures are together in this one world. The Chinese philosophers Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, from 2500 years ago, also said this very same thing and felt the same way. Thus, I feel a deep connection between Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Chinese philosophy.

'I sought out different poets from different worlds and different points in history to form *Choral Concerto: Nine*. I used the poetry of Qu Yuan from 2400 years ago, perhaps some of the earliest ritual opera, where the music has been lost but the words remain. In my imaginings, I try to replace the music of this ancient poetry and lyric, bringing back what has vanished.

Another poet I turned to is Li Bai, from 1300 years ago. His poetry about nature is so beautiful – describing the company of the moon amongst the shadows.

'Human beings and nature have a deep connection, and I have always been fascinated by it: the lovemaking between the shadows, human beings, and the moon. I also use some words from Schiller and quote Beethoven's renowned 'Ode to Joy' – to the creatures of nature, creatures of love, and creatures of our own mind. However, throughout the work, many of the words that the chorus sings and chants are empty words. Some are from Taoist and Buddhist traditions and some are simply nonsense. 'Empty' means everything. Nothing exists in an enduring manner. I find it very interesting to use the 'emptiness' to represent 'everything'. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony reflects who we are as human beings and thus fulfils the shapeless space and complements the greatest sound in silence. That is why I thought using empty words in the chorus or the gesture of vocalising to sing the Choral Concerto might be an interesting parallel to Beethoven. In the last movement, 'Time', I ask myself: Why do we exist among the stone, among all kinds of nature? Is it not for peace? Why do we have to live? We all want to live the same way. In this movement, I hope to portray our responsibility to live in peace with nature and create peace amongst ourselves.'



© Feng Hai

Interval – 20 minutes

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

Text

Tan Dun – Choral Concerto: Nine

Note: Some words are only sounds: 'Empty words, no meaning,' as marked by the composer in the score. These are indicated by [...]

1. Nine

[whispered] A Yin, a Yang, no-one knows what who can do ...
Who did the drawing of nine heavens,
Why nine spheres float up roaming around?
Nine...
The everlasting song ...
The immersive mantra.
O Nature.
Mother of Earth, spirit of all,
Eternal rest grant them:
The suffering water,
The dying forest,
The dark air,
The innocent all beings,
O Nature,
Your eyes are the sun and moon comforting,
Shining on our souls
With mercy, forgiveness, joy and peace.
[...]

2. Wine

Joy, joy, all creatures drink of joy.
Drink, drink, at the nature's breasts.
[...]

3. Time

[...]
Heaven, Earth, Man,
We come as one!
Heaven, Earth and all creatures,
May you and I be one!
[...]
We come as one!
All people become brothers,
All creatures sing of joy,
All roses pass to you and next,
All kisses to joy and peace.
O Nature,
Your eyes are the sun and moon,
Shining with joy and peace.
Heaven, Earth and all creatures,
May you and I be one!

Programme notes

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770–1827

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 (Choral)

1824

Elizabeth Watts *soprano*

Hongni Wu *mezzo-soprano*

John Findon *tenor*

Matthew Rose *bass-baritone*

London Philharmonic Choir

London Chinese Philharmonic Choir

1. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso

2. Molto vivace

3. Adagio molto e cantabile

4. Presto

The text for the 4th movement ('Ode to Joy') is on page 18.

Throughout his career, Ludwig van Beethoven was a fervent believer in Enlightenment values and sought ways to express this in many of his compositions. One of the reasons for the broad and sustained appeal of his Ninth Symphony is that people enjoying or seeking freedom see the work as exquisitely expressing a message they wish to proclaim loudly. That message is simple, one we learn as children: People should live together in joyous brotherhood.

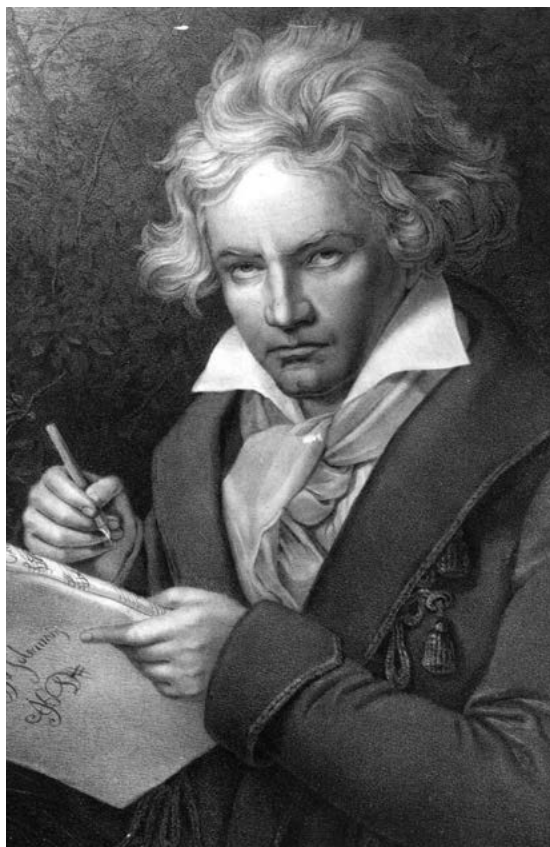
As a child of the Enlightenment, Beethoven grew up during the American and French revolutions. He followed political events throughout his life and experienced war close-hand when Napoleon Bonaparte's troops invaded Vienna in 1805 and 1809. His first large-scale composition, written at the age of 19, was an impressive cantata commemorating the

death of Emperor Joseph II, who had done so much to liberalize the Habsburg monarchy during the early 1780s. Years later, Beethoven wrote his lone opera, *Fidelio*, which tells the story of a loving woman's brave efforts to save her husband, an unjustly jailed political prisoner. Through her heroic deeds, he is rescued and tyranny exposed.

For his final symphony, Beethoven turned to a lengthy poem by Friedrich Schiller that he had long wanted to set to music: 'An die Freude' or 'Ode to Joy' (1785). Schiller's famous words state that in a new age the old ways will no longer divide people; 'all men shall become brothers'. Since the premiere of the Ninth Symphony in Vienna in May 1824, performances of the work have become almost sacramental occasions, as musicians and audiences alike are exhorted to universal fraternity.

Programme notes

Courtesy of the Royal College of Music, London



On a musical level, few pieces have exerted such an impact on later composers. How, many wondered, should one write a symphony after the Ninth? Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Anton Bruckner – the list goes on – all dealt with this question in fascinating ways that fundamentally shaped 19th-century music. Schubert, who most likely attended the 1824 premiere, briefly quoted the ‘joy’ theme in his own final symphony, written the following year. Most of Bruckner’s symphonies begin in the mysteriously evocative manner of the Ninth. Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Mahler and Dmitri Shostakovich followed the model of enlisting a chorus. Wagner was perhaps the composer most influenced, co-opting the work to argue that, in it, Beethoven pointed the way to the ‘Music of the Future’ – a universal drama uniting music and words that, in short, was realized in Wagner’s own operas.

Composers are not the only people who have been deeply engaged with the Ninth and struggle with its import and meaning. The work has been appropriated for widely diverse purposes, surfacing at crucial times and places for nearly two centuries. As the ultimate ‘feel-good’ piece, the Ninth has been used to open the Olympic Games and bring nations together in song. Yet, during the Nazi era, it was performed to celebrate Adolf Hitler’s birthday. Its melody is the official anthem of the European Union – but it was also the anthem of Ian Smith’s racist regime in Rhodesia during the 1970s.

In more recent memory, protesters played recordings of the Ninth in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square and jubilant students chose it as a theme song when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. Commemorative performances took place in the wake of 9/11, where the Ninth was once again enlisted for its hopeful message. And more recently, the work was reimagined during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even with all the health protocols, classical musicians – amateurs and professionals alike – found ways to make a joyful noise. Impromptu choruses sang the ‘Ode to Joy’ from balconies in Italy, and orchestras, choruses and soloists engineered impressive collaborative feats with musicians playing individually in isolation and imaginatively figuring out technological ways to weave together a full ensemble.

In a penetrating essay, ‘Resisting the Ninth’, music historian Richard Taruskin pointed to ways in which some musicians and listeners have resisted the Ninth Symphony, embarrassed by what they consider its naive optimism. This symphony, Taruskin states, ‘is among connoisseurs preeminently the Piece You Love to Hate, no less now than a century and a half ago. Why? Because it is at once incomprehensible and irresistible, and because it is at once awesome and naive.’

Those who revere the Ninth Symphony may be surprised to hear that some have ever resisted it. Undoubtedly, the message has been somewhat neutered by trivialisations in movies and TV commercials, and often treated by musicians in purely musical terms rather than in humanistic ones. For some modern listeners, Taruskin argues, its message may be difficult to take seriously anymore: ‘We have our problems with demagogues who preach to us about the brotherhood of man. We have been too badly burned by those who have promised Elysium and given us gulags and gas chambers.’ Yet Beethoven understood that great works of art matter, in part because they constitute a threat to tyrants. Beethoven strove for ways to express a deeply-felt political vision.

Programme notes

The opening of the first movement grows out of a void. Against the murmurings of the low strings emerge falling fifths in the violins that build to a loud and imposing first theme. It has been likened to the creation of the world; no symphony before sounded anything like it. Beethoven reversed the expected order of movements (another feature later composers would imitate) by following with a *scherzo*. A favourite with audiences from the beginning (especially the prominent role given to the timpani), it projects both humour and power. The lyrical slow movement seems to explore more personal, even spiritual realms.

The finale opens with what Wagner called the 'terror fanfare', a dissonant and frantic passage that leads to a 'recitative' (so marked in the score) for the cellos and basses. Fragments from the previous three movements pass in review – a few measures of the opening theme of each – but are in turn rejected by the strings. After this strange, extended instrumental recitative comes an aria-like melody: the famous 'Ode to Joy' tune to which words will later be added. After some seven minutes, the movement starts over again; the 'terror fanfare' returns, this time followed by a true vocal recitative with the bass soloist singing, 'O friends, not these tones! But rather, let us strike up more pleasant and more joyful

ones.' (The words for these two lines were written by Beethoven, not Schiller.) The chorus and four vocal soloists take up the 'joy' theme, which undergoes a series of variations (including a brief section in the 'Turkish' manner, with cymbals, triangle, drum, piccolo and trumpets). The music reaches a climax with a new theme: 'Be embraced, ye millions ... above the starry canopy there must dwell a loving Father' – which is later combined in counterpoint with the joy theme and eventually builds to a frenzied coda.

Programme notes © Christopher Gibbs

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London
Philharmonic
Orchestra

Text

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 (Ode to Joy)

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne! sondern lasst uns
angenehmere anstimmen, und freudenvollere!

Freude, schöne Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein,
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen
Mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund.

Freude trinken alle Wesen
An den Brüsten der Natur,
Alle Guten, alle Bösen
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
Einen Freund geprüft im Tod,
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott!

Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen,
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, überm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn überm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muss er wohnen.

Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805)

O friends, not these sounds! Rather let us strike up
something more pleasing and joyful!

Joy, lovely spark of the divine,
Daughter from Elysium,
Drunk with fire, we approach,
Heavenly one, thy shrine!
Thy spells reunite
What convention has torn apart;
All humanity becomes brothers
Where thy gentle wings rest.

Let him who has that great good fortune
A friend's friend to be,
Let him who has gained a charming wife
Join in rejoicing!
Yes, and whoever calls even one soul
Upon the earth his own!
And he who never could, let him steal
weeping away.

All creatures drink joy
At Nature's breast,
All the good, all the evil
Follow her rosy trail.
She gave us kisses and the vine,
A proven friend to the death,
The worm was given sensual feelings,
And the cherub stands before God!

Glad, as his suns race
Through the heavens' glorious design,
Run your course, brothers,
Joyful, like a hero to the victory.

Be embraced, you millions,
This kiss for all the world!
Brothers, above the starry firmament
A loving father must dwell.

Do you fall to your knees, you millions?
Do you feel the Creator's presence, world?
Seek him above the starry firmament!
Above the stars he must dwell.

English translation © Eric Mason



Alina Ibragimova



Jonathon Heyward

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Edward Gardner

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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

Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony

Wed 8 Apr 2026, 7.30pm

Anna Thorvaldsdottir
CATAMORPHOSIS
Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1
Beethoven Symphony No. 6
(Pastoral)

Kirill Karabits conductor
Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider violin

6pm | Royal Festival Hall
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Harmony with our Fragile Earth

Free pre-concert talk with scientist
Johan Rockström, environmentalist
Tony Juniper and composer Anna
Thorvaldsdottir.

Brahms's Double

Fri 10 Apr 2026, 7.30pm

Dvořák In Nature's Realm
Brahms Double Concerto for violin
and cello
R Schumann Symphony No. 4

Jonathon Heyward conductor
Pieter Schoeman violin*
Kristina Blaumane cello†

*LPO chair supported by Neil Westreich

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