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Philharmonic  
Orchestra

**MARQUEE TV**  
Digital concert programme

**2025/26 concert season**

Filmed live at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

# Rachmaninov's Second Symphony

Broadcast 3 April 2026

Rachmaninov Symphony No. 2

**Karina Canellakis** conductor

Generously supported by Richard Buxton

**SOUTHBANK  
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# Contents

*Click on the headings to jump to a section*

---

3 On stage

4 London Philharmonic Orchestra

5 Leader: Pieter Schoeman

6 Karina Canellakis

7 Programme notes

9 Marquee TV

10 Thank you

12 Sound Futures donors

13 LPO administration

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Concert performed at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall on 25 October 2025 and filmed by Intersection.

This concert was dedicated to the memory of the late Pehr G Gyllenhammar, former Chairman of the London Philharmonic Trust (2006-11).

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Sophie Phillips  
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Iain Ward  
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# London Philharmonic Orchestra



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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 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 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 another season bursting with performances and community events in our Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden residencies.



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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'

Click or scan the QR code to watch our interview with Pieter



# Karina Canellakis

Principal Guest Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra

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© Marco Borggreve

Internationally acclaimed for her symphonic and operatic performances characterised by interpretive depth, refinement and emotional impact, Karina Canellakis is welcomed by the finest musical institutions across the globe. She has been Principal Guest Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2021, and is also Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra.

October 2025 saw Karina's first full album release on the LPO's own label: a pairing of Tchaikovsky's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, recorded live in concert at the Royal Festival Hall ([LPO-0137: see page 8](#)).

As Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, this season Karina programmes and leads a range of newly commissioned works alongside great masterworks at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the TivoliVredenburg in Utrecht. Other 2025/26 highlights include her debut with the Vienna Philharmonic at the Mozartwoche Salzburg; and her debut at the Hamburg State Opera with Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* and Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy*. She returns this season to the Swedish Radio Symphony, Vienna Symphony, Chicago Symphony and San Francisco Symphony orchestras, and will also make her debut with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Geneva.

Karina conducts at least one opera-in-concert each season with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra at the Concertgebouw, and in March 2026 leads Britten's *Peter Grimes*, featuring Allan Clayton in the title role.

2023 saw the start of a multi-album collaboration between Karina, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic and Pentatone, with their debut release, Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* and *Four Orchestral Pieces*, earning a Grammy nomination. Her second album for Pentatone, Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, was released in 2025 to glowing international reviews.

Karina has developed close relationships with several of the world's leading orchestras, regularly returning to the Bavarian Radio Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Vienna Symphony and Munich Philharmonic, and top American orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco symphonies, and the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras. She was Principal Guest Conductor of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra from 2019–23, and in 2023/24 was Artist-in-Residence at Vienna's Musikverein.

Already known to many in the classical music world as a virtuoso violinist, Karina grew up in New York City. She was encouraged to become a conductor by Sir Simon Rattle while playing in the Berlin Philharmonic as a member of the Karajan-Akademie. She spent several years performing as a soloist, guest leader and chamber musician, until conducting eventually took over after she won the Sir Georg Solti Award in 2016.

Karina Canellakis's position with the LPO is generously supported by Richard Buxton.

# Programme notes

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## Serge Rachmaninov

1873–1943

## Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27

1907–08

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1. *Largo – Allegro moderato*

2. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*

3. *Adagio*

4. *Finale: Allegro vivace*

Thanks largely to the concertos, Rachmaninov is usually thought of primarily as a composer for the piano, but before he left Russia for the last time in 1917, he was more widely recognised as a composer of vocal, chamber and orchestral music, and a gifted conductor active both in the concert hall and the opera house. The Third Piano Concerto came well into a period of heartening success that had served to wipe away the creatively crippling depression caused by the disastrous premiere of the First Symphony ten years earlier: 1901 had seen him return to form with the Second Piano Concerto; in 1902 he had married, his wife giving birth to a daughter the following year; and 1904 had brought a conducting post at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow, where, early in 1906, he presided over well-received premieres of his operas *Francesca da Rimini* and *The Miserly Knight*.

By this time, however, Rachmaninov was beginning to feel the strain of celebrity, and made the decision to give himself more breathing space by removing himself and his family to Dresden. It was there that he composed his Second Symphony, in such secrecy that even his closest friends were unaware of the fact until they read about it in the press. 'I have completed a symphony, it's true!', he wrote to one of them in February 1907. 'It's only ready in draft. I finished it a month ago and immediately put it aside. It was a severe worry to me and I am not going to think about it any more.' The score was eventually completed early the following year and the premiere took place in St Petersburg on 8 February 1908, with Rachmaninov himself conducting.

The Second Symphony is both one of Rachmaninov's most popular orchestral compositions and one of his finest, a work of relaxed expansiveness and easy melodic flow, yet also one of great expressive power and sweep. Rachmaninov's talent for memorable melody is as present as ever here, but it never descends into facility; like Tchaikovsky (whose influence is unmistakable), he was able to move the listener with a big tune, but also to mould his melodies into great architectural spans with a subtlety that makes them appear totally natural. This Symphony is in fact shot through with motivic connections and links, but so organic do they seem that the listener could be forgiven for hardly noticing.

Three important thematic cells are set out in the Symphony's opening eight bars. The first, a weighty, undulating figure heard in the cellos and basses, is closely followed by a lightly syncopated stab from the woodwind and horns, and then by a downward-winding line in the violins. All are significant to the work as a whole, but for the moment they serve to initiate a sombre slow introduction which is lengthy enough to include a powerful climax before subsiding on to a cor anglais solo. The main *Allegro* section of the movement features two themes, the first a dreamy transformation of the opening cello-and-bass figure, and the second (heralded by a brief clarinet solo) a romantic dialogue between wind and strings with links to the syncopated second motif. Reminders of all three motifs then continue to appear as the music drives forward through a Tchaikovskian climax in the central

## Programme notes

development section (built largely on the first motif), warm restatements of the principal themes, and on to an impassioned finish.

The second movement starts out as a breezily confident *Scherzo*. Simpler in design than its companions, it is in three sections, the third of which is essentially a reprise of the first. The outer sections oppose a striding main theme and a lovingly lyrical second for strings, while the central one introduces a contrasting texture of closely worked, chattering counterpoint. Towards the end of the reprise, the brass interrupt with an apparition of the first movement's second motif, and the *Scherzo* ends in unexpectedly ominous mood.

The *Adagio* that forms the third movement is one of Rachmaninov's most generous melodic creations, a worthy cousin to the slow movement of the Second Piano Concerto, to which it bears similarities. Strangely, its two main themes are presented almost on top of each other, the initial arpeggio-based string melody

being immediately followed by a long and languid solo clarinet tune, but both are given ample space to breathe in the course of the ravishing movement that follows, as Rachmaninov handles their leisurely juxtaposition with great skill and expressive control, decorating them here and there with glistening remembrances of the by-now familiar motifs.

The Finale announces its intentions in joyously whirling, carnivalesque music whose textural complexities carry numerous thematic references to what has gone before. Rachmaninov does not intend to let the movement run away with him, however, and before long introduces a noble violin theme to calm things down. It is an uplifting new presence, and proves even more heart-swellingly so when – following a nostalgic reminiscence of the slow movement and a mounting exciting section built on descending scales – it makes its majestic return as the Symphony's crowning glory.

*Programme note © Lindsay Kemp*

## Karina Canellakis on the LPO Label



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Symphony No. 5  
Symphony No. 6

**Karina Canellakis** conductor  
**London Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Released 24 October 2025**



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*'The decision to appoint Canellakis was a stroke of genius on the LPO's part – her rapport with the Orchestra grows stronger with every collaboration – and she never fails to bring out the best in her players.'*

Music OMH ★★★★★

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