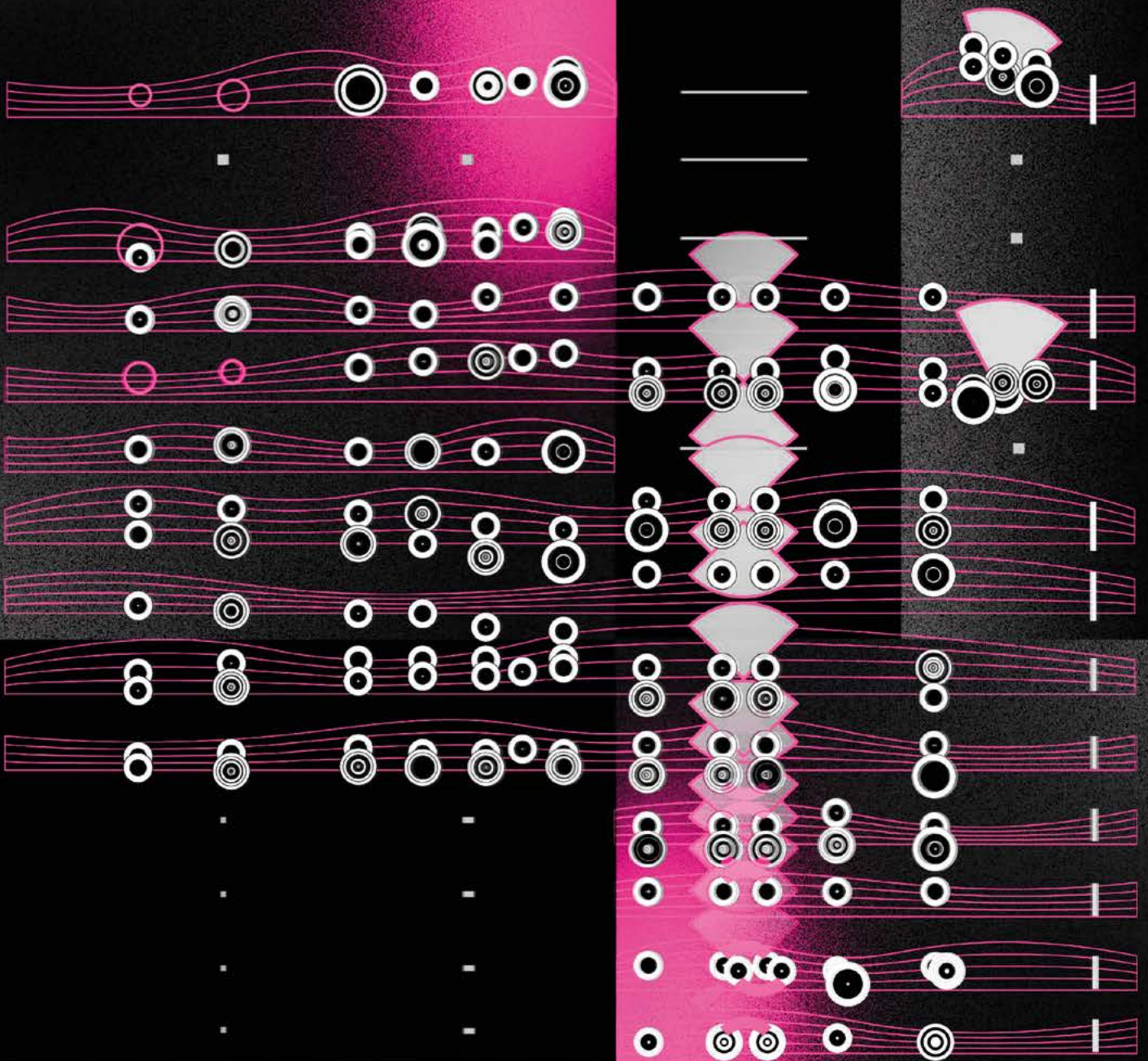


London
Philharmonic
Orchestra

TUNE IN

- AUTUMN / WINTER 2026 -



IN SEARCH OF PURPOSE

- 04 -

Artistic Director Jesús Herrera on the human stories and inspirations shaping this season's music

THE POWER OF LISTENING

- 06 -

Launching our new campaign with an inspiring collaboration between music and art

BACKSTAGE

- 16 -

Principal Contrabassoon Simon Estell reveals the secrets of the wind section's deepest voice

LATEST ON THE LPO LABEL

SCAN THE QR CODES TO LISTEN OR FIND OUT MORE



KARINA CANELLAKIS CONDUCTS TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONIES NOS. 5 & 6



LPO-0137
Released October 2025



ELGAR: THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

Edward Gardner conductor
Allan Clayton | Jamie Barton | James Platt
London Philharmonic Choir | Hallé Choir



LPO-0138
Released November 2025



MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 9

Vladimir Jurowski conductor



LPO-0139
Released January 2026



EDWARD GARDNER CONDUCTS STRAUSS AN ALPINE SYMPHONY METAMORPHOSEN



LPO-0140
Released June 2026



EDWARD GARDNER CONDUCTS BARTÓK THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN SUITE THE WOODEN PRINCE

LPO-0141
Release date 23 October 2026

COMING
SOON

Our releases are available to stream via all major platforms.
Download or order CDs via our online store: lpo.ochre.store

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

DUNARD FUND



PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER



MAJOR SUPPORTERS



CORPORATE SPONSORS

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



OrchLab Project Partner

PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER



MAJOR SUPPORTER



LPO CORPORATE MEMBERS

Bloomberg
Carter-Ruck Solicitors
French Chamber of Commerce
German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce
Lazard
Natix Corporate & Investment Banking
Walpole

PREFERRED PARTNERS

Amazon Web Services
Google
Lindt & Sprüngli
Mayer Brown
Steinway & Sons
Welbeck

WELCOME

We are very much looking forward to the new season, and to an exciting autumn ahead. As you will see in the pages that follow, there is plenty happening across the LPO – from a compelling new season of concerts and recordings to creative collaborations and Education & Community projects. Alongside this, in this issue we hear from some of the many people who bring the Orchestra to life and shape what we do.

A thread running through so much of our work is the power of listening. Of course, listening is at the heart of what we do as an orchestra: listening to one another, responding, and creating something together. But its power extends far beyond the concert platform. Listening can open up new perspectives, spark creativity, and help us build stronger connections with the people and communities around us.

This season, 'In Search of Purpose' is one chapter of a wider exploration of listening. Through the music we perform, we are invited to think about what gives our lives meaning, how we respond to adversity, and where we find the strength to move forward. From Beethoven's extraordinary determination to continue creating despite his profound challenges, to Britten's plea for peace in his *War Requiem*, and Elgar's exploration of faith in *The Dream of Gerontius*, this season's repertoire offers powerful stories of human resilience and purpose.



DAVID BURKE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
JESÚS HERRERA
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

That same spirit of listening shapes our Education & Community activity. From the expansion of our work with disabled adults into Bognor Regis, to our growing programme of activity in Dover, we are working alongside communities, listening to what matters to them and finding creative ways to make music together. These projects are a vital part of the LPO's identity, enriching the Orchestra, its communities and its musicians.

In this issue, you'll also discover more about an exciting collaboration with the Royal College of Art, new releases on the LPO Label, our new TV series on Sky Arts, news from the London Philharmonic Choir,

and some of the achievements and milestones we have celebrated over the past year.

We hope you enjoy reading, listening and discovering what lies ahead. Most of all, we hope you'll be able to join us this season.

David Jesús

STAY CONNECTED



LONDONPHILHARMONICORCHESTRA



LPORCHESTRA



LONDONPHILHARMONICORCHESTRA



LONDONPHILHARMONICORCHESTRA



LPORCHESTRA

EDITOR Rachel Williams
rachel.williams@lpo.org.uk

PRINTER John Good Ltd

COVER IMAGE 'Chaos, Perfectly Orchestrated'. Artwork by Zengyue Zhao, inspired by Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* (see page 6).



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

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this publication, we cannot accept liability for any statement or error contained herein. © 2026 London Philharmonic Orchestra.

CONTENTS

- IN SEARCH OF PURPOSE 04
- ON THE PODIUM 05
- THE POWER OF LISTENING 06
- NEW & NOTEWORTHY 07
- EDUCATION & COMMUNITY 08
- SUMMER ROUNDUP 09
- LONDON PHILHARMONIC CHOIR 10
- MEMBER FAREWELLS 11
- LPO PEOPLE 12
- CONCERT LISTINGS 13-15
- BACKSTAGE: SIMON ESTELL 16



The paper used for all LPO brochures and concert programmes has been sourced from well-managed FSC®-certified forests, recycled materials, and other controlled sources. It is also Carbon Balanced, meaning the carbon impact of its production is offset by the World Land Trust through the purchase and preservation of ecologically important forestry under imminent threat of clearance. In the production of this *Tune In* issue, **333kg of CO2 equivalent** was offset through Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) reduction projects.

LPO 2026/27 SEASON IN SEARCH OF PURPOSE

LPO Artistic Director Jesús Herrera reflects on why context matters, and how this season's theme invites us to hear familiar masterpieces in a new light.



As artistic directors, we often ask ourselves whether it's actually a good idea to work with 'overarching themes'. Ultimately, piecing together the jigsaw puzzle of a season, balancing an artistic vision, the wishes of conductors and soloists, programmes that we hope will resonate with audiences, and an array of scheduling practicalities is difficult enough. Why add another layer of complexity?

There are many possible reasons, but for me, it all comes down to two words: providing context. Classical music aficionados are entirely convinced that orchestral music can be phenomenal, something transformative that makes life infinitely richer. But for many others it may feel distant, perhaps even inaccessible.

While it is true that many of the iconic works we are so fortunate to perform were written decades or often centuries ago, they all emerged from artists who were driven to express something fundamentally human. This means the inspiration within these compositions can reflect experiences just as close to anyone in today's audience, regardless of their previous exposure to an orchestra. As custodians of this incredible legacy, I believe it is a beautiful duty not just

to present this repertoire because it is fantastic, but to be as generous as we can in how we provide that context. Exploring themes that amplify the depth of the music and connect listeners to its essence is a challenge, in my opinion, undoubtedly worth taking on.

'In Search of Purpose' is a wonderful example of a concept that offers an inspiring opportunity to portray something profoundly valuable: how, in times of adversity, we can find a way forward, a spark that allows us to gather strength we maybe didn't know we possessed. Naturally, this theme stems from the immense task of doing justice to Beethoven during his anniversary season, specifically by portraying his journey 'from darkness to light'. In his 1802 'Heiligenstadt Testament', Beethoven famously despaired over his fading hearing, the loss of his very connection to music-making. Yet, despite these staggering challenges, he chose to find the strength to keep going, leaving behind an overwhelmingly optimistic, humanistic legacy. He found his purpose in the very act of creation, realising that sharing these deeply profound messages with humanity was a calling worth living for.

Beyond Beethoven, almost every LPO London programme this season has a deep connection to a different facet of purpose. We begin with Britten's *War Requiem* (26 September) and its profound purpose of advocating for peace amidst conflict: a message tragically relevant today. We then move to Dvořák's Cello Concerto (2 October), infused with an expression of deep grief as his sister-in-law (with whom it is said he had been secretly and profoundly in love in his youth) lay dying. It is a poignant articulation of feelings that words alone could not capture. In Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* (21 October), we encounter the 'anti-theme': a soul whose purpose is entirely lost, roaming through life without a compass. Further on, Gustav Mahler's purpose – as he proclaimed himself – was to

encapsulate the entire world within a symphony (No. 1, 6 November), while Richard Strauss sought to capture his own life in *Ein Heldenleben* (18 November), and even tackles existential questions inspired by Nietzsche in *Also sprach Zarathustra* (10 February). Few stories move me more than that of Béla Bartók, who, while battling leukaemia and after years without composing a single note of original music, created his masterpiece, the *Concerto for Orchestra* (20 March). And we close the season on 24 April with Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, which explores humanity's ultimate purpose: coming to terms with our own mortality.

We could map out an extensive list of connections, as almost every concert aligns fascinatingly with this narrative. Instead, I invite you to join us in our concerts to discover every step of this journey for yourself, as we harness *The Power of Listening* on a collective mission: 'In Search of Purpose'. ●

FIND OUT MORE

lpo.org.uk/in-search-of-purpose



LPO PEOPLE ON THE PODIUM

CONDUCTOR NEWS



Following our announcement in March 2026 that **Paavo Järvi** will be the London Philharmonic Orchestra's next Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor, the Orchestra also announced in June that Principal Guest Conductor **Karina Canellakis** has extended her tenure for three further years, until 2030. Together, these appointments provide both continuity and fresh artistic direction, reinforcing the Orchestra's long-term creative vision for the years ahead.



Before he takes up his new Principal Conductor role in 2028, audiences have a chance to catch **Paavo Järvi** in action with the Orchestra on 17 February 2027, when he conducts a concert headlined by Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10. The evening opens with an overture by Järvi's fellow Estonian Veljo Tormis, before Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 ('Emperor'), performed by acclaimed British pianist Benjamin Grosvenor. Tickets are selling fast – book now at lpo.org.uk/whatson



Since becoming the LPO's Principal Guest Conductor in 2021, **Karina Canellakis** has forged what's been described as 'one of the most exciting musical partnerships on the classical music scene' (*MusicOMH*). Reviews have praised her 'explosive chemistry' with the LPO, with recent highlights including a searing account of Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony and an acclaimed performance of Beethoven's Seventh. That synergy has also resonated internationally, with appearances at venues including the Vienna Musikverein and Hamburg Elbphilharmonie contributing to an Opus Klassik Award nomination for Tour of the Year (see page 6).

The partnership has proved equally compelling on record. Last year saw Karina's first album release on the LPO Label – Tchaikovsky's Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6 – which reviewers praised for its emotional intelligence and expressive power.

Audiences have three opportunities to hear Karina with the LPO at the Royal Festival Hall during the 2026/27 season. On 4 November, she conducts Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 alongside Elgar's Violin Concerto with Christian Tetzlaff. Two days later, she returns for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with Alice Sara Ott and Mahler's Symphony No. 1. And on 27 January 2027, she conducts Schumann's *Julius Caesar Overture*, Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 ('Turkish') with Hilary Hahn, and Brahms's Symphony No. 1.

KARINA CANELLAKIS'S POSITION WITH THE LPO IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY RICHARD BUXTON.

LPO FELLOW CONDUCTORS 2026/27



We're delighted to introduce our new LPO Fellow Conductors, **Enyi Okpara** (left) and **Shira Samuels-Shragg** (right), who join the Orchestra from September. Working closely with Principal Conductor Edward Gardner, they will spend the season embedded in the Orchestra's activities, gaining first-hand experience across all aspects of its artistic life.

London-born **Enyi** is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, and last season was the Calleva Assistant Conductor at the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, after winning the BSO's Calleva Conducting Competition in 2024. He was recently featured in Classic FM's Rising Stars List for 2025, as one of '30 Incredible Musicians Under 30'.

American conductor **Shira** is a Juilliard School graduate, and from 2024–26 was Assistant Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. In 2025, she was awarded the Neeme Järvi Prize at the Gstaad Menuhin Festival, which comes with an invitation to conduct the Sinfonieorchester Basel.

Launched in 2023, our LPO Conducting Fellowship seeks to support the development of world-class conductors of the future. Each season, the programme offers an opportunity to work closely with the Orchestra to two outstanding early-career conductors from backgrounds currently under-represented in the profession.

Both conductors will make their LPO debuts at Eastbourne's Congress Theatre in the spring: Enyi's programme on 24 January includes Sibelius's Symphony No. 5, while Shira's debut on 14 February features Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 and Spohr's Clarinet Concerto. Both Enyi and Shira will also conduct a range of family and schools' concerts, and other events throughout the season.

LPO NEWS NEW & NOTEWORTHY

The power of listening

What happens when we really listen? The LPO is inviting you to explore the power of listening, and all the extraordinary ways that listening can inspire creativity, connection and new perspectives.

Of course, listening is at the heart of everything an orchestra does. But its impact reaches far beyond the rehearsal space or the concert hall. Through our Education & Community work, we listen to what young musicians need to find their purpose and to what communities need from us to help them thrive. Through our performances, collaborations and creative projects, we celebrate listening as a creative act and invite audiences to experience orchestral music in new ways.

This autumn, we launch an exciting collaboration with London's Royal College of Art. Working with internationally renowned designer Neville Brody, eight students from the RCA's School of Communication have been inspired by different pieces of music featured in our 2026/27 London season. Each of them was given an LPO recording – from Stravinsky's *The Firebird* to Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony – and asked to listen to the music. From there, the artists unleashed their imagination, each creating an original artwork based on their personal response to the work.

The resulting collection reveals just how differently we can all experience the same musical work. One listener might be drawn to colour, another to movement, another to a person, place or moment from their own life. Together, the artworks offer a vivid reminder that listening is never passive – it's imaginative, emotional, and deeply personal.

ABOVE: 'ESCAPE IN FOUR MOVEMENTS'. ARTWORK BY ANNA KORBEL, INSPIRED BY BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 5



From 21 September, billboards showcasing the artworks will be displayed around London through our partnership with creative agency Ace of Hearts, including at Tube stations and a bespoke outdoor 'sound gallery' at Vinegar Yard near London Bridge. There, until Tuesday 29 September, passers-by will be able to use headphones to listen to the music that inspired each piece while they view the artwork, creating a unique meeting point between orchestral music and visual art. Keep an eye out for our posters if you're travelling through London, and if you're nearby, why not pop by and visit the Vinegar Yard installation?

Over the coming seasons, we will continue to explore how listening enriches our lives, opens up new ways of thinking, and brings people together – reminding us that, in a world full of noise, taking the time to listen can be a powerful act in itself.

CHECK OUT THE ARTWORKS AND THE RECORDINGS THAT INSPIRED THEM:

lpo.org.uk/listening

TAKE A PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES ON YOUTUBE: youtube.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra

THIS ISSUE'S COVER IMAGE: 'Chaos, Perfectly Orchestrated'. Artwork by Zengyue Zhao, inspired by Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony*

AWARD SPOTLIGHT



The LPO has been recognised in several prestigious awards this year, reflecting the breadth of our work both on stage and in the recording studio. We were especially thrilled to be nominated for **Gramophone's Orchestra of the Year 2026** – the only UK orchestra to make the shortlist. Announcing the nominations, *Gramophone* pondered: 'Has any contender ever had such a prolific year as the London Philharmonic Orchestra?', praising the LPO's 'commitment to the art of recording, let alone their sheer musical brilliance'. Our LPO Label recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 9 with Vladimir Jurowski, released in January 2026 (LPO-0139), is also nominated for Orchestral Recording of the Year. The winners will be announced at the Gramophone Awards ceremony on 7 October.

At the **2026 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards**, the Series and Events Award was won by the Southbank Centre for its 2025 Multitudes Festival. The festival attracted sell-out audiences – 59% of them new to classical music – by boldly pairing its resident orchestras with artists from dance, theatre and film. Among its standout moments was the LPO's exhilarating double-bill of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* and *La valse*, performed alongside breathtaking acrobatics by Australian circus company Circa.

In February 2026, the Orchestra toured Germany, Austria and Luxembourg with Principal Guest Conductor Karina Canellakis and violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, performing at venues including the Vienna Musikverein and the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie. This tour was nominated for Tour of the Year at the **2026 Opus Klassik Awards**, one of Germany's highest honours in classical music.

The Orchestra's recording *War Silence – Rare Italian Piano Concertos* with pianist Roberto Prosseda on the Hyperion label won the **2026 International Classical Music Award** for Best Concerto Recording.

LPO NEWS

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

NEW SKY ARTS SERIES: INSIDE THE MUSIC

Our 2024 Sky Arts TV series, 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra', was nominated for a BAFTA, recognising its compelling storytelling and rare behind-the-scenes insight into orchestral life.

Following this success, Sky Arts has commissioned a second series, which airs this autumn. 'Inside the Music' explores five different symphonies performed by the LPO, with conductors Edward Gardner, Karina Canellakis and Paavo Järvi guiding viewers through each work. Combining performance footage and insights from musicians, the series reveals how these masterpieces are built.

'Inside the Music' begins on Tuesday 10 November, with new episodes weekly. Sky Arts is free to view on Freeview channel 36 and Freesat channel 147. Sky and NOW Entertainment Members can catch up on demand.

A SECOND CHANCE FOR CONCERT DRESS



At the end of March, Dressing Room 8 at the Royal Festival Hall was transformed into an LPO swap-shop, as musicians were invited to browse a collection of pre-loved concert wear.

Organised by violinist Kate Birchall and bassoonist Helen Storey, the event was part of the Orchestra's ongoing sustainability efforts. It gave musicians the chance to refresh their concert wardrobe while helping to support a good cause at the same time, with donations from the sale raising funds for Bromley Youth Music Trust.

A big thank you to everyone who donated, browsed, and helped give these outfits a second performance.

LPO LABEL NEWS

Edward Gardner's Strauss concerts with the LPO are always unforgettable – and now you can relive his live performances of *An Alpine Symphony* and *Metamorphosen*, courtesy of the LPO Label.

Released on 26 June 2026, **Edward Gardner conducts Strauss** (LPO-0140) went straight in at No. 5 in the Official Classical Chart in its first week. It is available on CD, and in Spatial Audio with Dolby Atmos on Apple Music Classical and all major streaming platforms.

Listening back to *An Alpine Symphony*, Ed described the recording as 'really quite revelatory', with Spatial Audio placing the listener at the heart of the orchestra. Scan the QR code to watch him experiencing the recording for the first time in our short video.



Looking ahead, Edward Gardner's next release on the LPO Label is out on 23 October. It pairs two works by Bartók:

***The Miraculous Mandarin Suite* and *The Wooden Prince*,**

both captured live in Royal Festival Hall concerts (LPO-0141).

lpo.org.uk/recordings

LPO LABEL STORE

Last year we launched the LPO Label online store, with access to the entire catalogue of over 140 releases in one place for the first time. Whether you're a CD or LP collector, or an audiophile wanting high-resolution downloads, we've got you covered! Check it out at lpo.ochre.store

EVAN WILLIAMS: WOVEN IN TEARS



We celebrated a special partnership earlier this year with the release of *Woven in Tears* by Evan Williams (pictured above) on the LPO Label. This exclusive digital release was the result of our ongoing collaboration with Grace Farms, a cultural and humanitarian centre in Connecticut, USA.

Over several years, the LPO and Grace Farms have built a meaningful and impactful partnership through projects that celebrate their shared values. The Orchestra's focus on prioritising human connection alongside its onstage artistry fits closely with the ethos of Grace Farms, which, through its Design for Freedom movement, is leading a campaign to eradicate forced labour in the building materials supply chain. Their first collaboration was an LPO string quartet performance at the opening of Theaster Gates's *Black Chapel*, the 2022 Serpentine Pavilion commission in Kensington Gardens – a project that also marked the first international initiative for Design for Freedom. Two years later, the Orchestra appeared in Grace Farms's stunning River building as part of its 2024 US Tour.

Woven in Tears was written by Evan Williams and commissioned by Grace Farms specially for their art exhibition 'With Every Fiber'. It was inspired by *Nasreen*, a portrait by British artist Hannah Rose Thomas of Nepali activist and modern slavery survivor Nasreen Sheikh. Weaving together musical material from Dowland's Renaissance air 'Flow, My Tears', it traces a journey from lament to liberation. The work was performed by Kate Oswin & Claudia Tarrant-Matthews (violins), Martin Wray (viola), Kristina Blaumane (cello) and Clódna Shanahan (piano).



LISTEN TO WOVEN IN TEARS:
lpo.ochre.store/release/596401

LPO NEWS

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

DEBUT SOUNDS 2026: HIDDEN REALITIES



On 15 July 2026, the Queen Elizabeth Hall came alive with the sound of new composing talent in our annual Debut Sounds showcase concert. Our five 2025/26 LPO Young Composers – **Edward Mascall-Robson, Seyoung Oh, Margot Pommellet, George Stevenson & Michael Taplin** – all premiered works inspired by the visionary modern sculptor Constantin Brâncuși, which they had been working on all year under the guidance of Composer-in-Residence and Composer Mentor Sir George Benjamin.

LPO players were joined on stage by musicians from our Foyle Future Firsts Development Programme, conducted by William Cole.

Watch the Debut Sounds concert free at youtube.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra

THE LPO YOUNG COMPOSERS PROGRAMME 2025/26 WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY JERWOOD FOUNDATION, ART MENTOR FOUNDATION LUCERNE, VAUGHAN WILLIAMS FOUNDATION AND THE MARCHUS TRUST.

THE FOYLE FUTURE FIRSTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2025/26 WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE FOYLE FOUNDATION AND PURPOSEFUL VENTURES, ALONGSIDE THE BARBARA WHATMORE CHARITABLE TRUST, IDLEWILD TRUST AND SCOPS ARTS TRUST AND WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM INDIVIDUAL CHAIR SUPPORTERS. LPO DEBUT SOUNDS 2026 RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM MR LUKE GARDINER.

NEW SHORES - EXPANDING OUR REACH IN DOVER



LPO schools' concert at Eastbourne's Congress Theatre, June 2026

The LPO's mission of artistry on stage and humanity beyond it continues to shape how we work with communities along the South Coast. Building on our established partnerships in Eastbourne – where 680 primary school children recently packed the Congress Theatre for our concert *The Big Enigma* – as well as in Brighton, Worthing and Bognor Regis, the LPO is now putting down new roots along the coast, in Dover. It's a place in which we've never had a dedicated presence before, and the welcome has been extraordinary.

Our first move was into Dover's beautifully renovated library. This summer, we ran workshops there inspired by the nationwide Summer Reading Challenge, getting young readers moving, singing and imagining to music around the stories they're reading. Later in the year, we'll return to build on that connection with a workshop for families in October.

As well as our work with children and families, we're building musical connections with people of all ages in Dover. At the town's Riverside Community Hub, we're developing sessions with the dementia support group there, using music's unique power to spark memory, connection and joy. And this September, look out for the LPO at the bandstand in the Market Square – performing as part of a local council initiative to bring free, open-air music to the heart of the town. No ticket, no formality – just music for whoever happens to be passing through. Later in the year, we're hoping to begin a partnership with Samphire Project, who support asylum seekers and refugees building new lives in Dover. We'll be welcoming them into the Orchestra's world, and inviting their stories into ours, creating songs together to perform later this year and into 2027.

Together, these projects mark an ambitious, joyful new chapter in Dover – one shaped by listening, collaboration and responsiveness, as the LPO grows its presence in the town.

ORCHLAB ARRIVES IN BOGNOR REGIS



This year we have expanded our innovative OrchLab programme into Bognor Regis, working with disabled residents at Shaftesbury Ashley Place care home. OrchLab supports accessible music-making with disabled adults, using a blend of acoustic and digital instruments to ensure that disability is no barrier to being creative.

Working with our partners Drake Music, we've been running workshops with Ashley Place residents, inspired by the music of the Orchestra, creating our own music and lyrics and generally having a great time! We've also worked closely with participants and care staff, offering guidance on how to use our free online OrchLab resources, as well as consulting with them on the development of a brand new motion-sensitive accessible instrument – working title 'Orchestra Beam'!

We look forward to developing our community connections at Ashley Place and more widely in beautiful Bognor.

CHECK OUT THE FREE ACCESSIBLE MUSIC RESOURCES, AVAILABLE TO ALL: orchlab.org

ORCHLAB IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY JTI.

“
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR VISITING US. THIS HELPS ME, THIS DOES – IT'S LIKE MEDICINE.
”

ORCHLAB PARTICIPANT
AT ASHLEY PLACE

LPO EVENTS SUMMER ROUNDUP

LPO GALAS 2026: LONDON & NEW YORK



On 29 June 2026, we hosted our *Stellar* Fundraising Gala at London's state-of-the-art venue HERE at Outernet. This spectacular evening celebrated the LPO's vital role in inspiring and championing the stars of tomorrow, and raised over £220,000 to support the Orchestra's work on the concert platform and beyond.

More than 200 guests enjoyed a sparkling reception, a sumptuous vegetarian banquet and performances by the wonderful musicians of the LPO. The evening featured dazzling guest mezzo-soprano Kseniia Nikolaieva and LPO Fellow Conductors Nefeli Chadouli and Wilson Ng.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended and supported this special event.

.....

This past January, rising stars from Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, LPO musicians and the sensational violinist María Dueñas took to the stage at Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Room for our annual American Friends of the LPO (AFLPO) Fundraising Gala. The evening was made even more special as we honoured esteemed former LPO Composer-in-Residence, Tania León, with the AFLPO Lifetime Achievement Award in Classical Music.

Thanks to our generous supporters, the Gala raised over \$200,000. These vital funds enable the AFLPO to support the London Philharmonic Orchestra's American tours and educational programmes, benefitting students in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

LPO PARTNERS

FRAGRANT NOTES WITH PENHALIGON'S



Music has the power to transport listeners to another time and place – just like a whiff of Proust's famous madeleines. So it's apt that the LPO has recently teamed up with British luxury fragrance brand Penhaligon's to explore the relationship between music and scent in a social media campaign marking the 10th anniversary of Penhaligon's Portraits Collection.

LPO violinist Cassandra Hamilton (left), cellist Henry Shapard and bassoonist Jonathan Davies star in video reels co-curated with Penhaligon's to evoke the personalities of three iconic Portraits. 'The Coveted Duchess Rose', a fragrance of desire and beauty, finds expression in the soaring violin melody from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. The bold confidence of

'The Blazing Mister Sam' is captured by the effortless warmth of the opening cello melody from Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. And the plangent strains of the bassoon solo from the slow movement of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony embody the nobility of 'The Tragedy of Lord George'.

The campaign was filmed at Penhaligon's flagship Regent Street store for the LPO's Instagram page, where visitors can also view some fun behind-the-scenes footage. Check it out at [instagram.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra](https://www.instagram.com/londonphilharmonicorchestra)

CELEBRATING THE ENGLISH WINE RENAISSANCE WITH LAY & WHEELER



The English winemaking renaissance is in full swing, with pioneering producers making world-class sparkling wine from the chalky *terroirs* of Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. In celebration of the synergy between beautifully-crafted English wine and exceptional music, Lay & Wheeler were delighted to connect LPO patrons with one of the country's most revered producers – West Sussex-based Wiston Estate – for a special two-day event in May 2026.

The weekend began at Glyndebourne

Festival Opera, where patrons enjoyed Puccini's *Tosca* performed by the LPO. The following day, celebrations continued at Wiston Estate, where guests explored homegrown sparkling wines paired with delicious food, and relaxed in the beautiful Sussex countryside.

Lay & Wheeler have been connecting wine lovers with some of the world's most interesting, exciting and pioneering producers for over 170 years, firmly believing that winemaking is an artistry, and so it felt natural that they would want to connect their audience with the extraordinary talents of LPO musicians, and introduce craftsmanship – of a winemaking variety – to the LPO's patrons. To find out more about English wine and browse a wide selection of buyer-curated bottles, visit [laywheeler.com](https://www.laywheeler.com)

LPO PEOPLE

LONDON PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

As we look ahead to a new season of music-making together, we caught up with the London Philharmonic Choir's Chorus Director Madeleine Venner to reflect on her first year in the role and look ahead to what's next.



It's hard to believe that we are already into my second season as Chorus Director of the London Philharmonic Choir. The first year flew by; it was a varied and busy programme of musical projects, and also a chance to establish some new initiatives to further enhance this glorious choir.

We kicked off in October with Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*, conducted by Sir Mark Elder. It was wonderful to work with him again after building such a close relationship during my time as Choral Director at the Hallé. To get to know and work with the LPO's Principal Conductor, Ed Gardner, has been a real thrill – he, David Burke, Jesús Herrera and the rest of the team at the LPO have been brilliantly supportive and welcoming from the very beginning. We traversed quite some ground, from the extraordinary virtuosity of John Adams's *Harmonium* to the restrained beauty of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*.

A continuous thread throughout 2025/26 was the Choir's warm relationship with our Guest Associate Chorus Director, Bo Wang, who coached the LPC magnificently in Mandarin for the *Symphony Kūkai* by Zou Ye; Bo brought his own choir, the London Chinese Philharmonic Choir, to sing alongside us under the baton of Tan Dun for the UK premiere of his own choral concerto, *Nine*, with the LPO. This was lots of fun to rehearse, and brought out a gift for the



Taking a bow with Bo Wang and Tan Dun following the UK premiere of *Nine* at the Royal Festival Hall, 28 March 2026

dramatic in our singers!

After the mammoth effort of nine straight performances of *The Lord of the Rings* films at the Royal Albert Hall, we closed the season with a concert as part of the St John's Waterloo Festival (accompanied by the wonderful Jonathan Beatty and Iain Farrington), and then a Prom in late July with the BBC National Chorus of Wales, singing Szymanowski again and Lili Boulanger.

Aside from preparing the Choir to the highest standards for all these engagements, I've been focused on getting to know singers individually and finding new ways to help us develop collectively. We set up vocal check-in sessions, which enabled me to hear individual voices and to chat in an informal way about technique and choir. We've been reconsidering our rehearsal set-up, looking at venues which can offer a few more amenities such as tea/coffee at the rehearsal break (an important pick-me-up for singers who've just raced over from their day's work). And we've initiated a series of one-to-one sessions for members with a vocal consultant; it's been a delight to be joined by Norbert Meyn and Bo Wang for these.

So, what next? It's an incredible season we have coming up – four extraordinary programmes, all under the baton of Ed Gardner. Britten's shattering *War Requiem* opens the season on 26 September, and then a tour to Hong Kong later in the autumn. There, our Associate Chorus Director, Victoria Longdon, will lead the Choir as they reprise their colossal April 2025 performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, this time with the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

What makes this season particularly special is that the LPC celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2027. I am so grateful to Ed and Jesús for marking this milestone with a stupendous choral programme: what better way to celebrate than by performing a brand new piece written for us by Dame Judith Weir? Our 27 February concert opens with the world premiere of her intensely beautiful new work, *Respire, Inspire*, alongside Vaughan Williams's moving *Dona Nobis Pacem* and Fauré's *Requiem* – always a firm choir favourite. After that, Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* (10 April) will provide a fascinating new challenge, before we close the season with Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* on 24 April.

We always welcome new members, so if you would like to be part of the amazing ensemble that is the London Philharmonic Choir, please visit lpc.org.uk/join-us ●



Madeleine in action rehearsing the LPC

LPO PEOPLE MEMBER FAREWELLS

This summer saw the retirement of two stalwart members of the Orchestra, with an impressive 40 years' service apiece. Horn player Gareth Mollison retired from the LPO at the end of July, while First Violin Thomas Eisner's final concert will be Britten's *War Requiem* on 26 September.



Gareth Mollison's Horn section colleague and LPO Board President, Mark Vines, reflects:

'Gareth 'Gaz' Mollison has been a member of the LPO for over 40 years; an exceptional achievement in any position, but particularly in the demanding and frequently very exposed role of the horn player. The LPO had always been the orchestra for Gareth; as a student and a young professional he would often come and watch them, in particular to hear his idol Nick Busch on First Horn. It must have been an immensely proud moment for him to join the Orchestra in 1986 to play Second Horn to Nick.

Latterly, Gareth moved to Fourth Horn, and it was in this position that I've had the pleasure to sit next to him for 15 years. There are several things that would strike me about Gaz on an almost daily basis, and it won't surprise anyone who knows him that one of these was his mischievous sense of humour. Apart from his huge repertoire of jokes (which would often leave the rest of us in stitches at the most awkward and inappropriate moments), his stated aim was to 'make the whole Orchestra laugh in as few syllables as possible' – something he frequently achieved, always with impeccable timing.

Another important facet of Gareth's character is his warmth, which shows itself in his constant support and encouragement of the people around him. But above all, Gareth still maintains a genuine, undimmed and almost boyish enthusiasm for playing and listening to the horn. He leaves the Orchestra without any hint of that passion diminishing, and very much still at the top of his game.'



Thomas Eisner's First Violin colleague Martin Höhmann writes:

'On 26 September 2026, Tom Eisner will take his final bow as a member of the LPO, bringing to a close a remarkable 40-year career with the Orchestra. Having played in the First Violin section alongside Tom for the past 26 years and shared a desk with him on many occasions, I have been fortunate to experience first-hand the qualities that have made him such a valued colleague and friend.

Prior to joining the Orchestra in 1986, Tom held positions with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra in Denmark, and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. The LPO, however, with its distinct artistic focus under Principal Conductors such as Bernard Haitink, Sir George Solti, Klaus Tennstedt, and later Kurt Masur, and of course its long-standing relationship with Glyndebourne, was a natural fit for Tom. His dedication to the LPO extended beyond the concert platform, including service as a Director on the Orchestra's Board during the 1990s and, more recently, on the Orchestra's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee.

Tom's enthusiasm for music, and for the Orchestra itself, has always been infectious. A passionate advocate for the great Germanic repertoire, and Wagner in particular, he realised a long-held ambition in recent years by performing at the Bayreuth Festival, as well as the Bavarian State Opera. Yet his interests have never been confined to the music alone. Tom has always taken a keen interest in every aspect of the Orchestra's life, nurturing relationships across the wider LPO family – from fellow musicians and staff to friends, supporters and benefactors.

Perhaps Tom's most valued quality has been his generosity towards others. Countless musicians new to the LPO have benefited from his warmth, support and encouragement. I will always be grateful to Tom and his wife, Jessica, for letting me stay in their home when I travelled from Germany for my trial with the Orchestra, and for helping me feel immediately at home in both the UK and the LPO.

The Orchestra will not be quite the same without Tom's unfailing enthusiasm, friendship and love of music. We all wish him the very best for his next chapter and have little doubt that we will continue to see him around the LPO for many years to come.'

LPO NEWS

LPO PEOPLE

NEW MEMBERS



In March we welcomed **Hannah Grayson** to the Orchestra as Sub-Principal Flute. Hannah is a former member of our Foyle Future Firsts Development Programme, in which she

participated back in 2011/12.



Auriol Evans & Heeyeon Cho

Two new members also joined our cello section in the spring: **Auriol Evans** in April and **Heeyeon Cho** in May.

Auriol's appointment has a particularly special connection to the Orchestra: her late father, Laurie Evans, spent three decades with the LPO, serving as Principal Trumpet from 1974–94 before continuing in the trumpet section until his retirement in 2004. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, Auriol joins us from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Like Auriol, Korean-British cellist Heeyeon enjoys a varied career as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. Also a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, she has worked with many UK orchestras and has appeared as Guest Principal with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She is also a passionate chamber musician and a co-founding member of the Halcyon Quartet.

MEET OUR MEMBERS
lpo.org.uk/whoswho

STAFF FAREWELLS

After almost 19 years as the Orchestra's Marketing & Communications Director, **Kath Trout** retired this summer. For nearly two decades, Kath has played a huge part in the LPO's success, leading our marketing and communications with creativity, care, and an unwavering commitment to the Orchestra. We thank Kath for everything she has contributed and wish her all the very best for the future.

This autumn we also say goodbye to LPO Librarian **Sarah Thomas**, who has been with the Orchestra for over 17 years. Sarah has shown incredible commitment to the Orchestra and the artists with whom we collaborate over many years. Her generosity of spirit, vast knowledge and skill will be hugely missed by us all.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Following the Orchestra's AGM in April, **Tania Mazzetti** stepped down from the Board after her term as a Player-Director, and **Claudia Tarrant-Matthews** was appointed. We extend our sincere thanks to Tania for her commitment and contribution in the role. We also thank **Tanya Joseph** for her service as a Director as she moves to join the Orchestra's Advisory Council.

We were pleased to welcome **Julian Simmonds** back to the Board over the summer, alongside new member **Fiona Gordon**.

LPC NEWS

At the London Philharmonic Choir's AGM in August 2026, **Tessa Bartley** stepped down as Chair after an impressive 19 years on the Choir's Board. We would like to thank Tessa for her many years of dedication and wish her all the very best for the future. We welcome tenor **Alex Marshall**, who takes over as Chair, and look forward to working with him.

Susan Thomas also stepped down as LPC Treasurer after 20 years in the role: the Choir would like to thank Susan for her commitment over the years and wish her all the best. **Kevin Cheng** has taken over as Treasurer.

WELCOME

We were delighted to welcome **Louise Williams** to succeed Kath Trout as Marketing & Communications Director in July. Previously Head of Sales & Marketing at the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Louise has also held roles at the Southbank Centre, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the LSO, Glyndebourne and Cadogan Hall.

Our Marketing & Communications team also welcomed **Cara Liddiard** as Marketing Assistant in January, and **Lia Kingdon** as Digital & Social Media Co-ordinator in May, succeeding **Alicia Hartley** who left in April. **Izzi Jones** was promoted to Marketing Manager in April, in recognition of her excellent contribution in her previous Co-ordinator role. With **Sophie Loneragan** currently on maternity leave, we were pleased to welcome **Katie Vickers** to cover the role of Senior Marketing Manager. We also welcomed **Georgie Blyth**, Press & PR Manager, back from maternity leave in July.

During the summer, our 'On the Road' team said farewell to Deputy Operations Manager **Stephen O'Flaherty** and welcomed **Jonathan Lockwood** as our new Transport Manager, alongside **Patrick McEntee**, who takes on the role of Stage & Operations Manager on a freelance basis for the season ahead. Patrick will work closely with **Gabrielle Slack-Smith**, who has been promoted to Deputy Stage Manager. We also say goodbye to Tours Manager **Aimee Walton** in September.

Elsewhere in the staff team, our Development department welcomed **Faye Jones** as Development Assistant in January, and **Zsuzsanna Deák** as Major Donor Manager in August.

Following the departures of Education & Community Project Manager **Ellie Jones** and Education & Community Co-ordinator **Ellie Leon**, we're delighted to welcome **Alex Tighe** as Education & Community Project Manager in September. We also said goodbye to **Alicia Downie**, PA to the Executive & Office Manager, and welcomed **Monica Rutherford**.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Senior Marketing Manager **Sophie Loneragan** and husband Aidan on the birth of their baby son Ellis Henry Loneragan on 29 March 2026.

LPO AUTUMN 2026 CONCERT LISTINGS

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Unless otherwise stated, all Southbank Centre concerts are at the Royal Festival Hall and start at 7.30pm.

Pricing information on our website:
lpo.org.uk

LPO Ticket Office: lpo.org.uk
020 7840 4242 (Mon–Fri 10am–5pm)

Booking fees apply: £3.50 online, £4 telephone

Southbank Centre Ticket Office:
southbankcentre.co.uk
020 3879 9555

Mon–Fri 10am–5pm | Sat–Sun 12pm–5pm

Booking fees apply: £4 online or telephone.

No transaction fees for in-person bookings, Southbank Centre Members, Supporters Circles and Patrons.

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

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

.....
Saturday 26 September 2026
7.00pm (please note start time)
Edward Gardner conducts Britten's War Requiem

Britten War Requiem

Edward Gardner conductor
Natalya Romaniw soprano
Allan Clayton tenor
Benjamin Appl baritone
London Philharmonic Chorus
Tiffin Boys' Choir and Girls' Choir

The LPO is grateful for the generous support of Fiona Espenhahn and Malcolm Herring, and the donations from this concert's syndicate of supporters.

Friday 2 October 2026
Kian Soltani plays Dvořák

Dvořák Cello Concerto
Franck Symphony in D minor

Marie Jacquot conductor
Kian Soltani cello

Wednesday 21 October 2026

Julia Fischer plays Brahms

Brahms Violin Concerto
Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony

Edward Gardner conductor
Julia Fischer violin

Friday 23 October 2026
The Firebird

Howell Lamia
Mark Simpson Piano Concerto
(world premiere)*
Stravinsky The Firebird
(complete ballet score)

Edward Gardner conductor
Tamara Stefanovich piano†

*Commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic, Philharmonie Essen and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

†Please note change of soloist.

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Karina Canellakis conducts Beethoven

Elgar Violin Concerto
Dai Fujikura Radiance (UK premiere)*
Beethoven Symphony No. 5

Karina Canellakis conductor
Christian Tetzlaff violin

*Co-commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra, 34th Music Biennale Zagreb, Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra and Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra.

Friday 6 November 2026
Alice Sara Ott plays Beethoven

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4
Mahler Symphony No. 1

Karina Canellakis conductor
Alice Sara Ott piano

Wednesday 18 November 2026

Strauss's Ein Heldenleben

Sibelius King Christian II Suite
Hindemith Kammermusik No. 4
R Strauss Ein Heldenleben

Robin Ticciati conductor
Vilde Frang violin

10.30am–3.00pm | Daytime event
The Clore Ballroom, Level 2, Royal Festival Hall

LPO Showcase: OrchLab Festival Day

OrchLab Festival Day is the culmination of this year's OrchLab programme, delivered in collaboration with Drake Music. This free but ticketed event is open to disabled adults, their families and those who support them (over 18s only). For more information visit orchlab.org/open-events

Wednesday 25 November 2026

Queen Elizabeth Hall (please note venue)
Lessons in Love and Violence

George Benjamin & Martin Crimp
Lessons in Love and Violence (semi-staged)

Edward Gardner conductor
Dan Ayling director
Nathaniel Sullivan King
Gyula Orendt Gaveston/Stranger
Georgia Jarman Isabel
Toby Spence Mortimer
James Way Boy/Young King
Hannah Sawle Witness 1/Singer 1/Woman 1
Joanne Evans Witness 2/Singer 2/Woman 2
Andri Björn Róbertsson Witness 3/Madman

Saturday 28 November 2026
6.30pm (please note start time)
Patricia Kopatchinskaja plays Shostakovich

Rachmaninov Youth Symphony
Shostakovich Violin Concerto No. 2
Rachmaninov Symphony No. 1

Edward Gardner conductor
Patricia Kopatchinskaja violin

LPO AUTUMN 2026 CONCERT LISTINGS

AROUND THE UK

Saturday 19 September 2026 | 7.30pm
Royal Albert Hall, London
royalalberthall.com

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5 (Emperor)
Beethoven Symphony No. 9 (Choral)

Oliver Gooch conductor
Tom Poster piano
Crouch End Festival Chorus

Sunday 27 September 2026 | 7.00pm
Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden
saffronhall.com

Errollyn Wallen Mighty River
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Clara-Jumi Kang violin

Saturday 3 October 2026 | 7.30pm
Brighton Dome
brightondome.org

Dvořák Cello Concerto
Franck Symphony in D minor

Marie Jacquot conductor
Kian Soltani cello

Free pre-concert event | 6.45pm
Enjoy a free pre-concert performance in the foyer from Soundcastle's People's Music Collective, an ensemble that celebrates creativity, connection and community through music.

Sunday 18 October 2026 | 3.00pm
Congress Theatre, Eastbourne
trafalgartickets.com

Glinka Overture, Ruslan and Ludmilla
Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto
Rimsky-Korsakov Scheherazade

Tom Fetherstonhaugh conductor
Ning Feng violin

Free pre-concert event | 2.15pm
Enjoy a free pre-concert performance in the foyer from Soundcastle's People's Music Collective, an ensemble that celebrates creativity, connection and community through music.

Saturday 24 October 2026 | 7.30pm
Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden
saffronhall.com

Mark Simpson Piano Concerto
Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony

Edward Gardner conductor
Tamara Stefanovich piano†

†Please note change of soloist.

Saturday 7 November 2026 | 7.30pm
Brighton Dome
brightondome.org

Dvořák My Homeland
Price Violin Concerto No. 1
Still Symphony No. 4

Kellen Gray conductor
Elena Urioste violin

Free pre-concert event, 6.45pm
Join us for a special free performance in the foyer, given by talented young musicians from Create Music, part of Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival and the Hub Lead Organisation for the Sussex Music Hub.

Monday 16 November 2026 | 7.30pm
Royal Albert Hall, London
London Jazz Festival
efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

With singer-songwriter **Melody Gardot**

Saturday 21 November 2026 | 7.00pm
The Forum, Bath: Bath Mozartfest
bathmozartfest.org.uk

Beethoven Leonore Overture No. 3
Mozart Piano Concerto No. 22 in E flat, K482
Brahms Symphony No. 2

Adam Hickox conductor
Till Fellner piano

Sunday 22 November 2026 | 3.00pm
Congress Theatre, Eastbourne
trafalgartickets.com

Beethoven Overture, Leonore No. 3
Neruda Trumpet Concerto
Brahms Symphony No. 2

Adam Hickox conductor
Tom Nielsen trumpet

Free pre-concert event, 2.15pm
Musicians from Create Music give a special free performance in the Congress Theatre foyer. Create Music is part of Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival and the Hub Lead Organisation for the Sussex Music Hub.

ON TOUR

CHINA, OCTOBER 2026

Saturday 10 October 2026 | 6.00pm
Sunday 11 October 2026 | 3.00pm
Central Opera House, Beijing

Mozart The Magic Flute

Dane Lam conductor

Monday 12 October 2026 | 7.30pm
National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing
Beijing Music Festival

Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3 (Scottish)
Mozart Selections from *Le nozze di Figaro*
Mozart Symphony No. 40, K550

Edward Gardner conductor
Changyong Liao baritone

Tuesday 13 October 2026 | 7.30pm
National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing
Beijing Music Festival

Mozart Overture, Don Giovanni
Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K466

Brahms Symphony No. 2

Edward Gardner conductor
Gerhardt Oppitz piano

LPO AUTUMN 2026 CONCERT LISTINGS

SPAIN, OCTOBER 2026

Monday 26 October 2026 | 8.00pm
Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona

Casals Prelude to El Pessebre
Brahms Violin Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Julia Fischer violin

Tuesday 27 October 2026 | 7.30pm
Auditorio de Zaragoza, Zaragoza
Programme & artists as 26 October

Wednesday 28 October 2026 | 8.00pm
Auditorio Nacional de Música, Madrid

Casals Prelude to El Pessebre
Brahms Double Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Julia Fischer violin
Daniel Müller-Schott cello

Thursday 29 October 2026 | 8.00pm
Auditorio Nacional de Música, Madrid

Brahms Violin Concerto
Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony

Edward Gardner conductor
Julia Fischer violin

Friday 30 October 2026 | 7.30pm
Palau de la Música Valencia

Brahms Double Concerto
Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony

Edward Gardner conductor
Julia Fischer violin
Daniel Müller-Schott cello

GERMANY & NETHERLANDS, DECEMBER 2026

Tuesday 1 December 2026 | 7.30pm
Congress Centrum, Hanover

Rachmaninov Youth Symphony
Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Alice Sara Ott piano

Wednesday 2 December 2026 | 8.00pm
Philharmonie, Cologne

Programme & artists as 1 December

Thursday 3 December 2026 | 7.30pm
Heinrich Lades Halle, Erlangen

Rachmaninov Youth Symphony
Shostakovich Violin Concerto No. 2
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Patricia Kopatchinskaja violin

Saturday 5 December 2026 | 7.00pm
Philharmonie, Essen

Rachmaninov Youth Symphony
Elgar Cello Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Anastasia Kobekina cello

Sunday 6 December 2026 | 2.15pm
De Doelen, Rotterdam

Rachmaninov Youth Symphony
Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4
Sibelius Symphony No. 5

Edward Gardner conductor
Alice Sara Ott piano

Monday 7 December 2026 | 8.00pm
Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg

Shostakovich Festive Overture
Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4
Rachmaninov Symphony No. 1

Edward Gardner conductor
Alice Sara Ott piano

Tuesday 8 December 2026 | 7.30pm
Konzert Theater, Coesfeld

Rachmaninov Youth Symphony
Shostakovich Violin Concerto No. 2
Rachmaninov Symphony No. 1

Edward Gardner conductor
Patricia Kopatchinskaja violin

Wednesday 9 December 2026 | 8.00pm
Alte Oper, Frankfurt

Shostakovich Festive Overture
Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4
Rachmaninov Symphony No. 1

Edward Gardner conductor
Alice Sara Ott piano

BELGIUM & NETHERLANDS, JANUARY 2027

Wednesday 13 January 2027 | 8.00pm
Concertgebouw, Bruges

Andrea Tarrodi Birds of Paradise II
Grieg Piano Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No. 1

Anja Bihlmaier conductor
Benjamin Grosvenor piano

Thursday 14 January 2027 | 8.00pm
Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels

Programme & artists as 13 January

Friday 15 January 2027 | 8.00pm
Theater Heerlen, Heerlen

Programme & artists as 13 January

Saturday 16 January 2027 | 8.15pm
Muziekgebouw Frits Philips, Eindhoven

Programme & artists as 13 January

Sunday 17 January 2027 | 2.00pm
TivoliVredenburg, Utrecht

Programme & artists as 13 January

LPO PEOPLE BACKSTAGE

How did your musical journey begin, and what first drew you to the bassoon?

I started playing the bassoon when I was seven, as a natural progression from the recorder. There happened to be one available at my school, and I loved its rich, deep sound from the start. One of my earliest musical memories is playing in the concert band at my school in Harrogate, alongside my two brothers on horn and oboe. Music was a big part of family life – my dad was a flautist and conductor, and although my mum still sings in a choir to this day, she never took up the clarinet, so we remained one player short of a wind quintet! The local schools' orchestra was my next musical adventure. As a teenager, it was amazing to perform huge pieces like Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony.

And how did you end up specialising in the contrabassoon?

My first proper encounter with the contrabassoon was while studying at the Royal Academy of Music. As part of the course, we were encouraged to play the 'extended' orchestral instruments, and at first I wasn't especially drawn to it. But I soon realised how important the instrument is in the orchestra, and once I started, I never looked back. It opened doors that wouldn't otherwise have been available and led quite quickly to regular orchestral work.

For those who may never have seen one up close, what exactly is a contrabassoon, and what role does it play in the orchestra?

The contrabassoon is the bass voice of the wind section, sounding an octave lower than the bassoon. It has around 16 feet of wooden and metal tubing, cleverly shaped to make such a large instrument playable. Its orchestral role is all about depth and colour. Sitting right at the bottom of the orchestra alongside the double basses and tuba, the contrabassoon can darken, broaden and intensify the overall sound. Remove it and you'd definitely notice! I love the challenge of creating a 'bed of sound' that the rest of the orchestra can build on.

You've been the LPO's Principal Contrabassoon since 2002. What has kept the role fresh and exciting over more than two decades?

Every programme brings something different. Discovering a new piece is



SIMON ESTELL

Simon has been Principal Contrabassoon of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2002. We chatted to him about his musical journey, life in the LPO, and his instrument's unique role in the orchestra.

always exciting, while returning to a familiar work is just as rewarding because every performance brings a fresh interpretation. The Orchestra itself is constantly evolving, too. In more than 20 years, I've played with four different formations of the bassoon section, each with its own personality. The goal is always the same, but the chemistry is always changing. I'm 53 now, and it's been a privilege to see so many talented young musicians join the Orchestra while also playing alongside colleagues who have given decades of service. There is so much talent around, and it's a testament to the outstanding teaching and training these young musicians receive, both here in the UK and around the world.

Are there any particular pieces in the orchestral repertoire that give the contrabassoon a chance to shine?

My favourites are generally the bigger pieces: Strauss, Shostakovich, Mahler and Ravel are all notable for exciting

contrabassoon writing. In Mahler and Shostakovich, we're often let off the leash with powerful, busy lines alongside the low strings and brass. Ravel, perhaps, writes some of the most notable solos, especially in his Piano Concerto for the Left Hand, where the contrabassoon sets the scene with a very low solo at the very beginning. I love that moment – the sense of loneliness, and the adrenaline it brings.

Next season I'm really looking forward to Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* on 18 November and Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony on 17 February, as well as Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* (21 October), in which I'll actually play third bassoon rather than contra. This is an important part of the job – playing bassoon when needed, and doubling (playing both bassoon and contra in a single piece) where necessary. I'm often seen putting one down and grabbing the other in lightning-fast time!

What might surprise people about life in a professional orchestra?

It's not always glamorous! Touring sounds great, but the travel and jetlag can be brutal. Five-hour coach journeys often leave little time to rest or eat, so we often end up snacking on the move and then eating properly after the concert, only to face another long journey. We find ways to get by, however. Sleep or cribbage cannot be underestimated!

Another thing that might be surprising is the preparation required to keep us and our instruments 'match fit'. As a double reed player, we're constantly working at finding the right setup with reeds. The reed is the small piece of cane at the top of the instrument that vibrates to produce sound, and unlike other instruments, it isn't fixed – we make and adjust them ourselves. It's a bit of a bugbear, but a necessity. We spend a lot of time making them and trying to perfect them ready for rehearsals and concerts. There's no greater feeling than a good reed. It extends your voice, and knowing what will happen when you approach music is the ultimate joy. With a bad one, that mood changes drastically. The margins are very narrow.

And finally, if the contrabassoon had a personality, how would you describe it in three words?

Deep, dark and comical! ●