



**Free concert
programme**

London Philharmonic Orchestra



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



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London Philharmonic Orchestra

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Conductor Emeritus Vladimir Jurowski KBE **Patron** HRH The Duke of Kent KG

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Leader Pieter Schoeman supported by Neil Westreich

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall
Friday 17 April 2026 | 7.30pm

Terence Blanchard: A Requiem for Katrina

Duke Ellington

The River Suite (30')

Interval (20')

Terence Blanchard

A Tale of God's Will: A Requiem for Katrina (70')

Daniela Candillari

conductor

Terence Blanchard

trumpet

The Terence Blanchard Quintet

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

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Tonight in 2 minutes

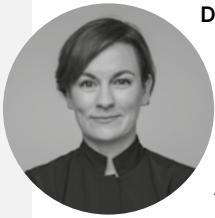
New to classical? Short on time? Your quick guide to tonight's concert.

The vibe

Terence Blanchard: A Requiem for Katrina

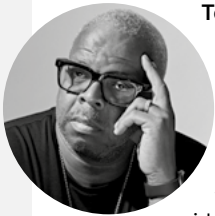
From Duke Ellington's swinging, blues-infused *The River Suite* to Terence Blanchard's powerful *A Tale of God's Will: A Requiem for Katrina*, tonight's concert traces jazz from its roots to today, connecting Ellington's celebration of the natural world with Blanchard's personal reflection on loss, community and resilience.

Who's on stage?



Daniela Candillari – conductor

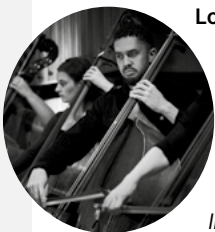
Daniela is tonight's guest conductor. Renowned for her imaginative programmes, she brings her 'confidence and inexhaustible verve' (*The New York Times*) to opera houses and concert stages throughout North America and worldwide. Tonight marks Daniela's first appearance with the LPO.



Terence Blanchard – trumpeter

Terence Blanchard is a leading figure in American music as both a composer and performer – his work spans jazz, film, opera and the concert hall. As a composer, he brings a powerful, contemporary voice to issues of history and identity, with music that's both richly expressive and deeply rooted in storytelling.

Terence has two roles tonight – he's the composer of the second work, *A Tale of God's Will*, and he will also perform in it, playing trumpet with his own Quintet alongside the Orchestra.



London Philharmonic Orchestra

Tonight there are over 60 LPO musicians on stage. Many of our talented members enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral roles.

Turn to page 6 for tonight's player list.

What to expect

Take your seats...

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



30 min

Duke Ellington The River Suite

Duke Ellington, one of jazz's greatest 20th-century composers and bandleaders, composed this eight-movement Suite in 1970 as a flowing journey from spring to sea. Combining Ellington's jazz roots with symphonic scale and sweep, it features shimmering flute solos, subtle percussion and light-footed textures that mirror the river's rapids.

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

Interval 20 min



70 min

Terence Blanchard A Tale of God's Will: A Requiem for Katrina

A Tale of God's Will is an extended jazz-orchestral journey in 12 connected sections. Tonight is its first ever performance in the UK, and we're honoured that composer and trumpeter Terence Blanchard is here to perform it with the Orchestra, alongside his Quintet.

Composed by Blanchard in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, *A Tale of God's Will* blends jazz, gospel and orchestral textures to reflect on the disaster's human and social impact. It evokes a multitude of moods – from blues-inflected themes to poignant trumpet solos, reflective balladic moments and rhythmic passages rooted in the New Orleans jazz tradition.

After the final piece, we applaud the performers. The conductor will acknowledge tonight's Leader (chief First Violin), Alice, and might 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 10 for a deeper dive into this evening's pieces.

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

Tonight's free pre-concert talk: 'The Nature Dialogues'



At 6pm tonight in the Royal Festival Hall, we welcome Professor Gail Whiteman, Head of the Nature & Climate Impact Team at the University of Exeter. She joins us for a free pre-concert talk with composer Terence Blanchard titled 'Harmony with our Changing Planet'.

As extreme weather events grow more destructive, how can societies adapt – and how can art help us face loss and find hope? This thought-provoking discussion will explore what it means to live, and make music, in harmony with a changing planet. It sets the stage for tonight's concert, which features Terence Blanchard's *A Tale of God's Will*, a deeply personal response to Hurricane Katrina that transforms grief into powerful symphonic jazz.

This event marks the finale of 'The Nature Dialogues', a series of free pre-concert talks by environmentalists, scientists and composers, which has offered fresh perspectives on the music and our season theme, *Harmony with Nature* (see page 9).

Coming soon: our 2026/27 season!

Our new 2026/27 concert season will be announced on **Tuesday 21 April**. LPO Friends receive our new season brochure ahead of the general public, and priority booking for Friends will open on Wednesday 22 April, before general booking from Tuesday 28 April.



LPO Friends enjoy many other fantastic benefits, including a private bar and opportunities to meet our musicians. Membership starts from just £6 per month. To find out more, scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/friends

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

Alice Ivy-Pemberton

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 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.



Alice Ivy-Pemberton joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra as Co-Leader in February 2023.

Praised by *The New York Times* for her 'sweet-toned playing', Alice has performed as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician to international acclaim. While growing up in New York City and studying with Nurit Pacht, Alice made a nationally televised Carnegie Hall debut aged ten, and was a finalist at the Menuhin International Competition at the age of 12.

Alice earned her Bachelors and Masters degrees at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho as a fully-funded recipient of the Kovner Fellowship. During her studies she won Juilliard's Violin Concerto Competition, performed extensively with the New York Philharmonic and The Philadelphia Orchestra, and led orchestras under the baton of Barbara Hannigan, Xian Zhang and Matthias Pintscher. Upon graduating in 2022 she was awarded the Polisi Prize and a Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant in recognition of 'tremendous talent, promise, creativity, and potential to make a significant impact in the performing arts'.

An avid chamber musician, Alice has collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, Anthony Marwood, Gil Shaham and members of the Belcea, Doric, Juilliard and Brentano string quartets, and performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Festival appearances include Music@Menlo, Moritzburg and Yellow Barn. Also a passionate advocate for new music and its social relevance, Alice created *Drowning Monuments*, a noted multimedia project on climate change that brought together five world premieres for solo violin.

On stage tonight

First Violins

Alice Ivy-Pemberton Leader

Vesselin Gellef Sub-Leader

Kate Oswin

Chair supported by Eric Tomsett

Lasma Taimina

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

Minn Majoe

Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria Chan

Vera Beumer

Yang Zhang

Thomas Eisner

Nilufar Alimaksumova

Amanda Smith

Kate Cole

Camille Buitenhuis

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal

Chair supported by The Candide Trust

Emma Oldfield Co-Principal

Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Marie-Anne Mairesse

Nancy Elan

Sophie Phillips

Chair supported by Friends of the Orchestra

Nynke Hijlkema

Ashley Stevens

Joseph Maher

Sioni Williams

Violas

Nicholas Bootiman

Guest Principal

Martin Wray

Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden

Laura Vallejo

Katharine Leek

Benedetto Pollani

Lucia Ortiz Saucó

Michelle Bruil

Alistair Scahill

Cellos

Henry Shapard Principal

David Dale

Francis Bucknall

Auriol Evans

Tom Roff

Helen Thomas

Double Basses

Hugh Kluger Principal

George Peniston

Tom Walley

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Charlotte Kerbegian

Flutes

Thomas Hancox

Guest Principal

Daniel Shao

Piccolo

Daniel Shao

Alto Flute

Thomas Hancox

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal

Jack Tostevin-Hall

Cor Anglais

Sue Böhling* Principal

Chair supported by Dr Barry Grimaldi

Clarinets

Benjamin Mellefont*
Principal

Chair supported by Sir Nigel Boardman & Prof. Lynda Gratton

Thomas Watmough

Chair supported by Roger Greenwood

Paul Richards*

Bass Clarinet

Paul Richards* Principal

Bassoons

Simon Estell* Principal

Helen Storey*

Horns

John Ryan* Principal

Martin Hobbs

Mark Vines Co-Principal

Gareth Mollison

Duncan Fuller

Trumpets

Paul Beniston* Principal

Chair supported by the Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

Tom Nielsen* Principal

Anne McAnaney*

Trombones

Mark Templeton* Principal

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

David Whitehouse

Bass Trombone

Lyndon Meredith Principal

Tuba

Lee Tsarmaklis* Principal

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Timpani

Simon Carrington*
Principal

Chair supported by Victoria Robey CBE

Percussion

Andrew Barclay* Principal

Chair supported by Gill & Garf Collins

Karen Hutt Co-Principal

Chair supported by Joe Topley & Tracey Countryman

Kit Drums

Matt Skelton

Harp

Tamara Young

Guest Principal

Piano

Catherine Edwards

**Professor at a London conservatoire*

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

An anonymous donor

David & Yi Buckley

Ian Ferguson & Susan

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Sir Simon Robey

Bianca & Stuart Roden

The Thompson Family

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Neil Westreich

Daniela Candillari

conductor



© Doris Gomolj

Conductor Daniela Candillari brings her 'confidence and apparently inexhaustible verve' (*The New York Times*) to opera houses and concert stages throughout North America and internationally. She is renowned for guiding groundbreaking world premieres to the stage 'with a sure hand' (*The New York Times*) as well as her 'incisive leadership' (*Wall Street Journal*) of classical music's most frequently performed masterpieces.

Tonight is Daniela's debut with the LPO. Her 2025/26 season also includes premieres with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company and Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra. She continues her long-term artistic relationships with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (OTSL), Music Academy of the West (California), and others.

In October 2025, Daniela made her Chicago Symphony debut with a programme featuring music by Carlos Simon, Thea Musgrave, Barber and Pergolesi. October also marked a return to her alma mater, Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, to conduct *La bohème*. In November, she made her debut with the Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra, and February brought her Canadian Opera Company debut, leading Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* in Toronto.

Last month, Daniela made her debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducting Elgar's *Serenade for Strings*, Sibelius's Symphony No. 2, and the world premiere of Mark Simpson's *The Immortal*. In June, she will conclude her 2025/26 season as Principal Conductor of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis by leading André Previn's operatic adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Daniela Candillari's 2024/25 season culminated in the acclaimed world premiere of *This House* by Ricky Ian Gordon, Lynn Nottage and Ruby Aiyo Gerber, as part of the 50th anniversary season at OTSL. Earlier in the year, she led the St Louis Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of Nina Shekhar's Accordion Concerto with soloist Hanzhi Wang, alongside Barber's *School for Scandal* Overture and Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony. She returned to New York to lead Trinity Church's resident orchestra NOVUS in the East Coast premiere of Gabriel Kahane's *emergency shelter intake form*. Other 2024/25 highlights included a return to New Orleans Opera to conduct Saint-Saëns's *Samson and Delilah*, and debuts with the Louisiana Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony and Tucson Symphony orchestras.

As a composer, Daniela Candillari has been commissioned by instrumentalists from the Boston, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh symphonies, as well as the three resident orchestras of Lincoln Center: the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the New York City Ballet. She is also deeply involved with Music Academy of the West's programming for young artists.

Daniela Candillari grew up in Serbia and Slovenia. She holds a Doctorate in Musicology from the Universität für Musik in Vienna, a Master of Music in Jazz Studies from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, and a Master of Music and Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the Universität für Musik in Graz. A Fulbright Scholarship recipient, she was also awarded a TED Fellowship, and is fluent in German, English, Italian, Serbian, and Slovenian.

Terence Blanchard

composer | trumpeter



© Cedric Angeles

‘Blanchard’s body of work is one of the broadest and most imposing of any living jazz musician.’

The New York Times

A true ‘Renaissance Man’, Terence Blanchard stands tall as one of jazz’s most-esteemed trumpeters and a prolific composer for film, television, opera, Broadway, orchestras, and for his own ensembles. In fact, *TheaterMania* magazine recently cited him as ‘the most exciting American composer working in opera today.’

An eight-time Grammy winner and twice Oscar-nominated film composer, at the 2022 Academy Awards Blanchard became only the second African American composer to be nominated twice in the Original Score category. He has been a consistent artistic force for making powerful musical statements concerning painful American tragedies past and present, and his work has placed him at the forefront of giving voice to human rights, civil rights and racial injustice. This includes the 2015 album *Breathless*, an elegy for Eric Garner, who was killed by police and whose words: ‘I can’t breathe’, became a civil rights rallying cry.

Blanchard is also heralded as an opera composer, whose *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* is based on the memoir of celebrated writer and *New York Times* columnist Charles Blow. The Metropolitan Opera premiered *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* in September 2021 to open its 2021/22 season, making it the first opera composed by an African American composer to premiere at the Met in its 138-year history. The recording of those performances received a Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Of the historical moment, Blanchard said: ‘I don’t want to be a token, but a turnkey.’ *Fire* has been widely recognised as a cultural milestone, returning to the Met for a second run in 2024.

Blanchard’s first opera, *Champion*, tells the troubled story of boxer Emile Griffith. It premiered in 2013 with a libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winner Michael Cristofer and starred Denyce Graves, and it went on to win the 2024 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.

Collaborating with filmmaker Spike Lee over three decades, Blanchard has composed for over 20 projects – ranging from the 2006 Emmy Award-winning documentary *When the Levees Broke* (whose score became the basis of tonight’s work, *A Tale of God’s Will*) to the films *BlackKkKlansman* and *Da 5 Bloods*, both of which garnered Oscar nominations.

Born in New Orleans in 1962, Blanchard is a musical polymath who launched his solo career as a bandleader in the 1990s. Since then, he has released 20 solo albums, garnered 15 Grammy nominations, composed for the stage and for more than 60 films, and received 10 major commissions. He has been named an official 2024 NEA Jazz Master as well as a member of the 2024 class of awardees for the esteemed American Academy of Arts and Letters, and currently serves as the Executive Artistic Director for SF Jazz, the largest non-profit jazz presenter in the world.

Regarding his consistent attachment to artistic works of conscience, Blanchard confesses: ‘You get to a certain age when you ask: “Who’s going to stand up and speak out for us?” Then you look around and realise that the James Baldwins, Muhammad Alis and Dr. Kings are no longer here ... and begin to understand that it falls on you. I’m not trying to say I’m here to try to correct the whole thing, I’m just trying to speak the truth.’

Programme notes

Harmony with Nature

Tonight's works and our 2025/26 season theme

Tonight's concert is the final event in our 'Harmony with Nature' series. Throughout our 2025/26 season, we've invited audiences to join us in exploring one of the most urgent conversations of our time – our relationship with the natural world – through the power of music. Together we've marvelled at oceans, forests, caves, mountains and wildlife through works by Beethoven, Sibelius, Mendelssohn, Elgar and Dvořák; masterpieces of an era that saw nature as a mirror of human emotion – but also, perhaps, experienced it more immediately and organically than in the digital age.

Closer to our own time, voices as diverse as Duke Ellington, John Luther Adams, Gustavo Díaz-Jerez and Anna Thorvaldsdottir have all found an unquenchable source of creative energy in the

processes of nature, from river deltas to volcanic eruptions. For composers such as Anna Korsun, Gabriela Lena Frank and Terence Blanchard (whose powerful meditation on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina receives its UK premiere tonight), humanity enters the picture. As destroyer or protector? Or simply as an organic, inextricable part of nature itself? In Blanchard's case, the focus is on the human cost of a natural disaster, exploring grief, loss and resilience in the face of overwhelming natural forces.

Before that, the first half of tonight's concert comprises Duke Ellington's Suite from *The River*, tracing a waterway from spring to sea and reflecting the season's theme by focusing on nature itself, before humanity comes into sharper focus after the interval.

The Nature Dialogues

Tonight – our final pre-concert talk exploring *Harmony with Nature*

Book free tickets online at lpo.org.uk or visit the Ticket Office

Harmony with our Changing Planet

Tonight, 6pm, Royal Festival Hall

As extreme weather events grow more destructive, how can societies adapt – and how can art help us face loss and find hope?

Terence Blanchard's deeply personal response to Hurricane Katrina, *A Tale of God's Will*, transformed grief into powerful symphonic jazz, capturing both the devastation of his native New Orleans and the enduring strength of its people.

This pre-concert talk with Professor Gail Whiteman – head of the Nature & Climate Impact Team at the University of Exeter – explores what it means to live, and make music, in harmony with a changing planet.



Programme notes

Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington

1899–1974

The River Suite

1970

1. *Spring*
2. *Meander*
3. *Giggling Rapids*
4. *Lake*
5. *Vortex*
6. *Fals*
7. *Village of the Virgins (Twin Cities)*
8. *Riba*



Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., in 1899, and died in New York City in 1974. Commissioned by American Ballet Theatre for choreographer Alvin Ailey, *The River* is his only large-scale suite that was intended for dance from its beginning. The work follows a waterway through its various stages, from a spring to rapids, a lake to a vortex. Ellington also saw this narrative as a spiritual one, with the moment the river reaches the sea serving as a kind of rebirth. In a 1983 interview, Ailey explained Ellington's deep engagement with its theme: 'Once he decided that he was going to write this river piece as a ballet, he had all the world's water music on recordings. He had Handel's *Water Music*, he had Debussy's *La Mer*, he had Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*. He said: "I've been listening to this to see what other people have done with water music."'

Canadian composer and arranger Ron Collier worked with Ellington on a number of projects throughout his life, and Collier orchestrated some of Ellington's original 12 movements for the American Ballet Theatre premiere in 1970. Unlike many symphonic Ellington arrangements, Collier's does not include a full drum kit; instead, sticks and brushes on suspended cymbal

Programme notes

often give a more minimal but tasteful nod to the drum kit sound. As one might expect of water music, several beautiful flute solos are featured (such as particularly lovely solos over hushed strings at the opening and close of the 'Lake' movement). In general, both the music and the orchestration are light-footed, sweeping dancers and audience alike onwards and out to sea.

© Flannery Cunningham, Wise Music Group

Interval – 20 minutes

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

A new series of our LPO podcast – coming soon!

Pitch me

Classical

Hosted by saxophonist and broadcaster Yolanda Brown, with LPO musicians

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Programme notes

Terence Blanchard

born 1962

A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)

2007 (UK premiere)

Terence Blanchard *trumpet*

Terence Blanchard Quintet:

Ben Wendel *saxophone*

Charles Altura *guitar*

Tal Cohen *piano*

David Ginyard *bass*

Oscar Seaton *drums*

1. *Ghost of Congo Square* (Blanchard, Derrick Hodge, Kendrick Scott)

2. *Levees*

3. *Wading Through*

4. *Ashé* (Aaron Parks)

5. *In Time of Need* (Brice Winston)

6. *Ghost of Betsy*

7. *The Water*

8. *Mantra* (Kendrick Scott)

9. *Over There* (Derrick Hodge)

10. *Ghost of 1927*

11. *Funeral Dirge*

12. *Dear Mom*

Programme notes

In late August of 2005, the US watched in shock as the beloved birthplace of jazz languished in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Many Gulf Coast hurricanes have achieved legendary status, fostered by a tradition of oral history as each storm becomes part of every local family's storied past – stories about what was lost, who was lost, how things changed, and how they moved forward. The name 'Katrina' undoubtedly stirs up jarring memories for many Gulf Coast residents, and the event itself became something of a cautionary tale, having exposed costly and alarming flaws in multiple areas of disaster management and infrastructure.

Following the infamous chaos that descended in the hours, days, and weeks after the storm, residents were left with more questions than answers. 'How did this happen? Who were we before this catastrophe and who are we now? Where do we go from here?' Spike Lee's 2006 Emmy Award-winning documentary *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* addressed those questions in a series of episodes that laid bare the fear, confusion, anger and hope of a traumatised community. Lee's long-time creative collaborator Terence Blanchard participated in the filming and created the score for the film. Blanchard's film music examined those same desperate questions in its own way and provided the framework for a new expression of the rage, sorrow, triumph, and remembrance that has propelled the New Orleans community forward for the last 20 years.

Blanchard has since skilfully arranged the film score into a multi-movement work with expanded orchestration and broadened the emotional range of the piece by including compositional contributions from his bandmates, inspired by their own experiences. The result is a musical artifact that captures the grief and confusion of a community and culture pushed to the brink, as well as the resilience and determination of the people of New Orleans to overcome tragedy and find new ways of healing.

A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina) journeys through the historical haunts of New Orleans, beginning with the percussion-driven ancestral spirit of 'Ghost of Congo Square'. The calm but ominous 'Levees' follows and includes themes from the traditional blues tune 'St. James Infirmary'. As the water rises, Blanchard issues a clear and foreboding warning on the trumpet, in what reviewer Brad Walseth called 'the most chilling blues a listener will ever hear'. The piano leads the ensemble in the lyrical 'Wading Through' and into the tranquil and moving 'Ashé' (West African for 'and so it shall be').

A sorrowful saxophone expresses the post-storm melancholy in 'In Time of Need', followed by the spirited 'Ghost of Betsy', a nod to the 1965 Category 4 hurricane that rocked the Gulf Coast and flooded the Lower Ninth Ward after breaching the levees. 'The Water' serves as a dark and churning interlude before 'Mantra' introduces a more energetic and hopeful mood that continues in 'Over There'. As quickly as the positive and optimistic energy begins, the phantoms of the past return.

The shadowy 'Ghost of 1927', led by solo saxophone riffs, is a poignant homage to the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 that devastated river delta communities in Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana, and prompted the federal government to construct the massive system of levees and floodways still in use today. Blanchard's profound and unsettling memory of witnessing the deceased drifting in their watery grave inspired him to compose a sincere musical eulogy to those lost to the flood in the stirring 'Funeral Dirge'. This exploration of grief culminates in 'Dear Mom', the final movement inspired by Blanchard's mother upon returning to her devastated home – a touching and personal moment featured in Spike Lee's film.

Terence Blanchard's work reaches into the past, both musically and spiritually, drawing out the spectres of ancestors, past storms, and lives lost, taking them by the hand to join us in our resolute march toward what lies ahead for New Orleans. He puts the hardest, most turbulent, and most touching moments of the community's experience on display in this musical love letter to the city, written in New Orleans' own native language – jazz. Blanchard said of *A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)*: 'This moment must be seen, has to be seen, by those people around the world who don't know what has happened here. What is happening here. Yes. Still.'

Programme note © Adrienne Stratton

We'd love to hear from you

We hope you enjoyed tonight's concert. Could you spare a few moments afterwards to complete a short survey about your experience? Your feedback is invaluable to us and will help to shape our future plans. Just scan the QR code to begin the survey. Thank you!



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Our 2026/27 concert season will be announced on **Tuesday 21 April 2026**. Priority booking for LPO Friends opens on Wednesday 22 April, before general booking from Tuesday 28 April.

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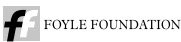
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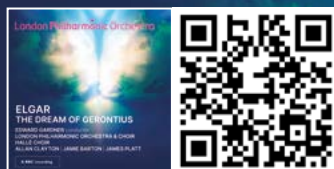


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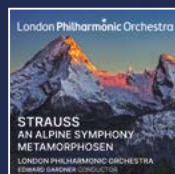


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