



**Free concert
programme**

London Philharmonic★ Orchestra



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



**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**
RESIDENT

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Principal Conductor Edward Gardner supported by Aud Jepsen

Principal Guest Conductor Karina Canellakis supported by Richard Buxton

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

Artistic Director Jesús Herrera **Chief Executive** David Burke

Leader Pieter Schoeman supported by Neil Westreich

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Saturday 25 October 2025 | 7.30pm

Rachmaninov's Second Symphony

Mozart

Overture, Idomeneo, K366 (5')

Mozart

Masonic Funeral Music, K477 (6')

Mozart

Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major, K503 (32')

Interval (20')

Rachmaninov

Symphony No. 2 (60')

Karina Canellakis

conductor

Generously supported by Richard Buxton

Paul Lewis

piano

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

Contents

- 2 Welcome
LPO news
- 3 On stage tonight
- 4 London Philharmonic
Orchestra
- 5 Leader: Pieter Schoeman
- 6 Karina Canellakis
- 7 Paul Lewis
- 8 Programme notes
- 13 Pehr G Gyllenhammar
- 14 Next concerts
- 15 The Nature Dialogues:
Pre-concert talks this season
- 17 Sound Futures donors
- 18 Thank you
- 20 LPO administration

MARQUEE TV

Tonight's concert is being filmed for future broadcast on Marquee TV.

We would be grateful if audience noise during the performance could be kept to a minimum, and if audience members could kindly hold applause until the end of the work. Thank you for your co-operation.

**SOUTHBANK
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RESIDENT



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ENGLAND**

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

Welcome

Welcome to the Southbank Centre

We're the UK's largest centre for the arts and one of the nation's top five visitor attractions, showcasing the world's most exciting artists at our venues in the heart of London. As a charity, we bring millions of people together by opening up the unique art spaces that we care for.

The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, National Poetry Library and Arts Council Collection. We're one of London's favourite meeting spots, with lots of free events and places to relax, eat and shop next to the Thames.

We hope you enjoy your visit. If you need any information or help, please ask a member of staff. You can also email hello@southbankcentre.co.uk or write to us at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX.

Subscribers to our email updates are the first to hear about new events, offers and competitions. Just head to our website to sign up.

LPO news

Tonight's concert on Marquee TV

Once again this season, a selection of our Royal Festival Hall concerts will be filmed for broadcast on Marquee TV. Tonight's concert is one of them – to be the first to hear when it's available to watch, sign up to our e-list at lpo.org.uk/signup, or keep an eye on our social channels.

If you would like to subscribe for unlimited access to Marquee TV's extensive range of music, opera, theatre and dance productions, you can enjoy 50% off an annual subscription with code **lpo50off**. Visit discover.marquee.tv/50lpo to find out more or subscribe.

LPO Friends – Behind-the-scenes

Earlier today, LPO Friends were treated to an exclusive behind-the-scenes experience, watching Karina Canellakis, Paul Lewis and the Orchestra in rehearsal for tonight's concert and enjoying a rare insight into the preparation and artistry that goes into each performance.

As well as exclusive access to a number of private rehearsals each season, LPO Friends membership puts you at the front of the queue for our Southbank Centre concert bookings, and offers invitations to other events and opportunities to meet LPO musicians throughout the year.



LPO Friends membership starts from just £6 per month. Interested in finding out more? Scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/friends

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On stage tonight

First Violins

Pieter Schoeman* Leader

Chair supported by Neil Westreich

Alice Ivy-Pemberton

Co-Leader

Lasma Taimina

Chair supported by Irina Gofman &

Mr Rodrik V. G. Cave

Minn Majoe

Chair supported by Dr Alex & Maria Chan

Thomas Eisner

Chair supported by Ryze Power

Yang Zhang

Nilufar Alimaksumova

Sylvain Vasseur

Amanda Smith

Daniel Pukach

Camille Buitenhuis

Eve Kennedy

Grace Lee

Tayfun Bomboz

Martin Höhmann

Eleanor Bartlett

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal

Chair supported by The Candide Trust

Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Joseph Maher

Nancy Elan

Marie-Anne Mairesse

Ashley Stevens

Sophie Phillips

Chair supported by Friends of the Orchestra

Sioni Williams

Vera Beumer

Emma Crossley

Sheila Law

Olivia Ziani

Nynke Hijlkema

Sarah Thornett

Violas

Vicki Powell Guest Principal

Stephanie Block

Martin Wray

Chair supported by David & Bettina Harden

Katharine Leek

Benedetto Pollani

Alistair Scahill

Shiry Rashkovsky

Rachel Robson

Luca Casciato

Jill Valentine

Laura Vallejo

Toby Warr

Cellos

Henry Shapard Principal

David Dale

Leo Melvin

Sibylle Hentschel

Sue Sutherley

Tom Roff

Helen Thomas

Iain Ward

Francis Bucknall

Laura Donoghue

Double Basses

Sebastian Pennar* Principal

Hugh Kluger

George Peniston

Laura Murphy

Chair supported by Ian Ferguson & Susan Tranter

Tom Walley

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Charlotte Kerbegian

Sam Rice

Antonia Bakewell

Flutes

Frederico Paixão

Guest Principal

Anna Kondrashina

Marta Santamaria

Piccolo

Marta Santamaria

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal

Alice Munday

Chair supported by David & Yi Buckley

Sue Böhling*

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

Bass Clarinet

James Maltby

Basset Horns

Thomas Watmough

James Maltby

Massimo Di Trolio

Bassoons

Simon Estell* Principal

Stuart Russell

Contrabassoon

Simon Estell* Principal

Horns

Annemarie Federle

Principal

Chair supported by Victoria Robey CBE

Martin Hobbs

Mark Vines Co-Principal

Gareth Mollison

Elise Campbell

Trumpets

Paul Beniston* Principal

Chair supported by the Williams family in memory of Grenville Williams

Anne McAneney*

Juan Martinez

Trombones

Mark Templeton* Principal

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

David Whitehouse

Bass Trombone

Lyndon Meredith Principal

Tuba

Lee Tsarmaklis* Principal

Chair supported by William & Alex de Winton

Timpani

Simon Carrington*

Principal

Chair supported by Victoria Robey CBE

Percussion

Andrew Barclay* Principal

Chair supported by Gill & Garf Collins

Karen Hutt Co-Principal

Oliver Yates

Feargus Brennan

Assistant Conductor

Nefeli Chadouli

**Professor at a London conservatoire*

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

An anonymous donor
Sir Simon Robey
Bianca & Stuart Roden
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Eric Tomsett

London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Mark Allan

Uniquely groundbreaking and exhilarating to watch and hear, the London Philharmonic Orchestra has been celebrated as one of the world's great orchestras since Sir Thomas Beecham founded it in 1932. Our mission is to share wonder with the modern world through the power of orchestral music, which we accomplish through live performances, online, and an extensive education and community programme, cementing our position as a leading orchestra for the 21st century.

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

Soundtrack to key moments

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

Sharing the wonder worldwide

We're one of the world's most-streamed orchestras, with over 15 million plays of our content each month. In 2023 we were the most successful orchestra worldwide on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, and in 2024 we featured in a TV documentary series on Sky Arts: 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra', which was nominated for a 2025 BAFTA. During 2025/26 we're once again working with Marquee TV to broadcast selected live concerts to enjoy at home.

Our conductors

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

Next generations

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

Pieter Schoeman

Leader

collaboration and inclusivity, our OrchLab and Open Sound Ensemble projects offer music-making opportunities for adults and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

Today's young instrumentalists are the orchestra members of the future, and we have a number of opportunities to support their progression. Our LPO Junior Artists programme leads the way in creating pathways into the profession for young artists from under-represented communities, and our LPO Young Composers and Foyle Future Firsts schemes support the next generation of professional musicians, bridging the transition from education to professional careers. We also recently launched the LPO Conducting Fellowship, supporting the development of two outstanding early-career conductors from backgrounds under-represented in the profession.

2025/26 season

This season's theme, *Harmony with Nature*, explores humanity's bond with the natural world through works by Beethoven, Sibelius, Mendelssohn, Elgar and Dvořák; masterpieces of an era that saw nature as a mirror of human emotion. Closer to our own time, we'll hear from composers as diverse as Duke Ellington, John Luther Adams and Anna Thorvaldsdottir, who have all found a source of creative energy in the processes of nature.

Highlights with Principal Conductor Edward Gardner include symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Brahms and Rachmaninov; a pair of concerts spotlighting 20th-century Central European composers; an evening dedicated to Elgar; and a performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* to end the season. We'll also welcome back Karina Canellakis and Vladimir Jurowski, as well as guest conductors including Robin Ticciati, Kirill Karabits, Mark Elder and Elim Chan. Our lineup of soloists this season includes violinists Anne-Sophie Mutter, Alina Ibragimova, James Ehnes and Himari; cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason; and pianists Yefim Bronfman, Alexandre Kantorow and Tomoko Mukaiyama. The season features nine world and UK premieres, including Tan Dun's choral 'Ode to Peace' *Nine*, and *A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)* by jazz icon Terence Blanchard.

We're also looking forward to tours to South Korea and across Europe, as well as another season bursting with performances and community events in our Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden residencies.



© Benjamin Ealovega

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

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

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

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

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

New video series: 'Humans of the Orchestra'

Scan the QR code to watch our interview with Pieter



Karina Canellakis

Principal Guest Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra

© Marco Borggreve



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

This is Karina's second Royal Festival Hall concert with the LPO this week, and last night they also performed together at Saffron Hall in Saffron Walden, where the LPO is a resident orchestra. Karina returns to the Royal Festival Hall stage on 18 February 2026 to conduct the Orchestra in Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with soloist Anne-Sophie Mutter, followed by a seven-city European tour.

This week saw Karina's first full album release on the LPO's own label: a pairing of Tchaikovsky's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, recorded live in concert at the Royal Festival Hall (LPO-0137: see page 9).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paul Lewis

piano



© Kaupo Kikkas

British pianist Paul Lewis is one of the foremost interpreters of the Central European piano repertoire, his performances and recordings of Beethoven and Schubert receiving universal critical acclaim. He was awarded a CBE in 2016 for his services to music, and the sincerity and depth of his musical approach have won him fans around the world. This global popularity is reflected in the world-class orchestras with whom he works, including the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Philharmonia, Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Bavarian Radio Symphony, NHK Symphony, New York Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras. His close relationship with the Boston Symphony Orchestra led to his selection as the 2020 Koussevitzky Artist at Tanglewood.

Paul often focuses on specific composers in projects that allow him to take audiences deep inside the works. In 2026 and 2027, he will tour his 'Mozart+' series around the world, juxtaposing Mozart's lesser-known piano repertoire with works by composers such as Poulenc, Chopin and Weber, illuminating Mozart's influences over subsequent generations, as well as shining a light on works that are often overshadowed by his concertos. Previously, between 2022 and 2025, he embarked on a Schubert Piano Sonata Series, presenting four programmes of the complete sonatas at over 40 venues around the world.

With a natural affinity for Beethoven, Paul Lewis has performed the composer's complete piano concerto cycle all over the world and was the first pianist to present it in a single BBC Proms season, in 2010. He has subsequently performed it in Tanglewood in 2022, Boston in 2023 with Andris Nelsons and the

Boston Symphony Orchestra, and in 2025 with Eivind Aadland and the Oslo Philharmonic. In 2020 he took part in the BBC Four three-part documentary, *Being Beethoven*.

Beyond many award-winning Beethoven and Schubert recordings, Paul Lewis's discography with Harmonia Mundi also demonstrates his characteristic depth of approach in Romantic repertoire such as Schumann, Mussorgsky, Brahms and Liszt. In March 2025, he gave the world premiere of Thomas Larcher's Piano Sonata in Oviedo, Spain, and he continues to perform it around the world.

In chamber music, Paul works closely with tenor Mark Padmore in Lieder recitals around the world – they have recorded three Schubert song-cycles together – and he is co-Artistic Director of Midsummer Music, an annual chamber music festival in Buckinghamshire. In May 2025, he was the first non-American pianist to chair the jury of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

Paul Lewis's many awards include the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist of the Year, two Edison Awards, three Gramophone Awards, the Diapason d'Or de l'Annee and the South Bank Show Classical Music Award, as well as honorary degrees from Liverpool, Edge Hill and Southampton universities.

Programme notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756–91

Overture, *Idomeneo*, K366

1781



Darkness and light, ritual and theatre, intimacy and grandeur – the first half of tonight's concert brings together three works that show Mozart's remarkable range. From the drama of the opera stage, to the solemnity of the Masonic lodge, to the brilliance of concert hall, we hear him exploring very different worlds of expression.

We open in the theatre, with the Overture to Mozart's opera *Idomeneo, re di Creta* ('Idomeneo, King of Crete' – more usually shortened to simply *Idomeneo*). Written when he was just 25, this was Mozart's first truly mature opera, and he approached it with an ambition that pushed both singers and orchestra to new heights. The story, drawn from Greek mythology, follows Idomeneo, King of Crete, who vows to Neptune that he will sacrifice the first person he meets on shore if spared from a storm at sea. That person turns out to be his own son, Idamante, and the opera unfolds as a tale of love, fate and human frailty under divine power.

The Overture gives us no direct themes from the opera, but instead sets the scene through sheer atmosphere. From the very start, the restless energy of the strings and the dark colours of the winds suggest the turbulence of the sea and the weight of destiny pressing on the characters. At the same time, there is brightness and momentum, a sense of urgency that pulls us into the drama. In just a few minutes, Mozart creates an orchestral prelude that combines grandeur with psychological tension – a fitting gateway to the opera, and to tonight's musical journey.

Programme note © London Philharmonic Orchestra

Programme notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756–91

Masonic Funeral Music, K477

1785

In 1784, at the age of 28, Mozart was admitted to a Viennese lodge of Freemasons, having deliberated for more than a year over whether to join. At the time, the Masonic movement stood as a genteel reaction against religious intolerance and political absolutism, inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of nature, reason and universal brotherhood, and the works Mozart now composed for various lodge ceremonies and occasions often showed a new tone of sombre nobility. One such is the short piece first performed at a joint memorial service for two fellow Masons on 17 November 1785. Originally scored for two oboes, clarinet, basset horn

(a type of low clarinet), two horns and strings, it was later expanded to include parts for two further basset horns and a double bassoon, making a proportionately large wind choir that gives the music its particular dark hue. Solemnity also resides, however, in the work's grief-laden march, and, after two ominously tolling notes from the winds about a minute-and-a-half in, the mournful appearance on oboes and clarinet of a chorale based on a plainchant melody traditionally associated with Holy Week.

Programme note © Lindsay Kemp

Just released on the LPO Label

Karina Canellakis conducts Tchaikovsky



Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 5
Symphony No. 6

Karina Canellakis conductor
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Released Friday 24 October 2025



Listen instantly or
order CD now

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

Music OMH ★★★★★

Programme notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756–91

Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major, K503

1786

Paul Lewis *piano*

1. Allegro maestoso

2. Andante

3. Allegretto

This is the last in the great series of piano concertos that Mozart composed in Vienna between 1784 and 1786, mostly for his own subscription concerts in Vienna; his remaining two piano concertos are one-offs from later years. Although the Concerto was probably begun in the winter of 1784/85, it was not completed, according to Mozart's catalogue of his own works, until 4 December 1786. It was presumably performed at Mozart's concert the following day, with the composer at the piano; he would have improvised the cadenza in the first movement, which explains why none has survived. Tonight's pianist, Paul Lewis, plays the cadenza by Alfred Brendel. As in all of Mozart's Viennese concertos, the wind section plays a prominent part; and it is a substantial one, consisting of a flute and pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, with timpani.

The work itself is equally substantial: in fact, it begins with the longest first movement in any of Mozart's concertos. This initial *Allegro maestoso* ('majestic') is notable for the military nature of its orchestral opening,

with sharply dotted (long–short) rhythms and prominent trumpets; for the contrasting chromaticism (use of notes outside the standard major and minor scales) of many of its later ideas; and for some passages of closely worked counterpoint in the orchestra, and later also involving the soloist. This is part of the unusually intensive, 'symphonic' development of the main ideas of the movement, which provided more than a few hints for Beethoven in his piano concertos.

In the F major slow movement (scored without trumpets or drums), the woodwind instruments come more into the foreground; but it is still the soloist who dominates, with delicately decorative scales and arpeggios, and some striking wide leaps which suggest a kind of operatic super-soprano. The finale is a rondo, with an elegant main theme in gavotte time. The first of the three contrasting episodes is recapitulated as the third; the central one strikes out into different territory, with the woodwind gradually gathering to join the brilliant solo piano.

Programme note © Anthony Burton

Interval – 20 minutes

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

Programme notes

Serge Rachmaninov

1873–1943

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27

1907–08

1. Largo – Allegro moderato

2. Scherzo: Allegro molto

3. Adagio

4. Finale: Allegro vivace



Courtesy of the Royal College of Music, London

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

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

Programme notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Programme note © Lindsay Kemp

We'd love to hear from you

We hope you enjoy today'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!

In memory of Pehr G Gyllenhammar

1935–2024

Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Pehr G Gyllenhammar, formerly Chairman of the London Philharmonic Trust (2006–11) and one of only a handful of distinguished individuals to be accorded Honorary Life Membership of the LPO. Pehr is remembered below by his wife, Dr Lee Croll.



© John Hrynuk Photography

A well-known industrialist, Pehr Gyllenhammar spent 24 years as CEO and chairman at Volvo (1970–94), where he remains the company's longest serving CEO. Known simply as 'PG' throughout his native Sweden, he was an iconic figure who was voted Sweden's 'Most Admired Man' for nine consecutive years.

After leaving Volvo, Pehr moved to London and was named chairman of Commercial Union, which he transformed into the insurance giant Aviva PLC. During the almost two decades that Pehr lived in London, he also served as Senior Advisor and Managing Director at the Investment Bank Lazard and subsequently as Vice Chairman, Europe at Rothschild.

Over the course of his career, Pehr sat on more than 28 different advisory and corporate boards around the world, including United Technologies, Chase Manhattan Bank, Reuters, and Pearson PLC. He was a bold visionary and strong advocate for cross-national infrastructure projects across Europe, which led him to co-found and serve as the first chairman of the European Roundtable of Industrialists – an organisation that was instrumental in creating the Channel Tunnel.

Pehr graduated from Lund University in 1959 with a degree in Law. Over the course of his lifetime, he was awarded numerous honours, including seven honorary doctorate degrees. In recognition of his service to Europe, he was named Commander of the French Legion of Honour in 1987. In 2001 he was also named Honorary Master of the Bench, Inner Temple, London.

Outspoken and passionate about ideas, Pehr was the author of seven books, which spanned topics from business and industry to more personal reflections. He was a lifelong supporter of the arts, both in London and New York. In his spare time he was an avid golfer and tennis player, as well as a celebrated yachtsman and ocean racer. He is deeply missed by his wife, Dr Lee Croll, and beloved daughter, Barrett.

Kahchun Wong



Himari



New World Symphony

**Wednesday 29 October 2025,
7.30pm**

Chinary Ung Water Rings
Sibelius Violin Concerto
Dvořák Symphony No. 9
(From the New World)

Kahchun Wong conductor
Himari violin

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Our next Royal
Festival Hall
concerts



Edward Gardner

A Sea Symphony

**Friday 31 October 2025,
7.30pm**

Sibelius Scènes historiques (Suite II)
Sibelius The Oceanides
Vaughan Williams A Sea Symphony

Mark Elder conductor
Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha
soprano
David Stout baritone
London Philharmonic Choir

Free pre-concert talk | 6pm
'Harmony with our Oceans'
With wildlife biologist &
broadcaster Liz Bonnin and
physicist & oceanographer
Helen Czerski.
Book free tickets via lpo.org.uk

Brahms's Fourth

**Wednesday 5 November 2025,
7.30pm**

Brahms Tragic Overture
Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1
Brahms Symphony No. 4

Edward Gardner conductor
Pavel Kolesnikov piano

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Friday 31 October 2025 6pm
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Harmony with our Oceans

With wildlife biologist &
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Saturday 21 March 2026 5pm
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Harmony with our Rivers

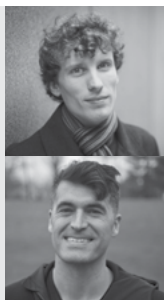
With extreme angler, author &
broadcaster Jeremy Wade



Saturday 29 November 2025
6pm
Royal Festival Hall

Harmony with Distant Planets

With composer Robert Laidlow
and astronomer David Kipping



Wednesday 8 April 2026 6pm
Royal Festival Hall

Harmony with our Fragile Earth

With scientist
Johan Rockström,
environmentalist Tony
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Anna Thorvaldsdottir



Saturday 17 January 2026
5pm
Royal Festival Hall

Harmony with the Volcanic World

With broadcaster & writer
Kate Humble

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Harmony with our Changing Planet

With social scientist
Gail Whiteman



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We are grateful to the following donors for their generous contributions to our **Sound Futures** campaign. Thanks to their support, we successfully raised £1 million by 30 April 2015 which has now been matched pound for pound by Arts Council England through a Catalyst Endowment grant. This has enabled us to create a £2 million endowment fund supporting special artistic projects, creative programming and education work with key venue partners including our Southbank Centre home. Supporters listed below donated £500 or over. For a full list of those who have given to this campaign please visit lpo.org.uk/soundfutures.

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