



**Free concert
programme**

London Philharmonic Orchestra



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



**SOUTHBANK
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RESIDENT

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Principal Conductor Edward Gardner supported by Aud Jebsen

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 7 February 2026 | 7.30pm

The Wooden Prince

Kaprálová Rustic Suite (16')

Szymanowski Stabat Mater* (23')

Interval (20')

Kaprálová Waving Farewell (6')

Bartók The Wooden Prince (48')

Edward Gardner conductor

Generously supported by Aud Jebsen

Juliana Grigoryan soprano[†]

Agnieszka Rehlis mezzo-soprano

Kostas Smoriginas bass

London Philharmonic Choir

Chorus Director: Madeleine Venner

[†]Please note change of artist

*Supported by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute



Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
Republic of Poland



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Free pre-concert performance | 6.00pm | Royal Festival Hall

Edward Gardner conducts a performance by the LPO Foyle Future Firsts with students from the Royal Academy of Music and members of the LPO, featuring Ligeti's *Melodien* and Bartók's *Dance Suite*. All welcome, no ticket required.

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

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**SOUTHBANK
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RESIDENT



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Tonight in 2 minutes

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

The vibe

The Wooden Prince

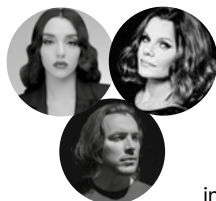
The title of this concert comes from its final piece, written by Hungarian composer Bartók for a fairytale ballet. Before it, we hear three other pieces by Central European composers that blend 20th-century style with folk-inspired melodies and vivid storytelling.

Who's on stage?



Edward Gardner - conductor

Ed is the LPO's Principal Conductor and works closely with the Orchestra all year round, so our musicians know him well and enjoy a special connection and rapport with him.



Juliana Grigoryan Agnieszka Rehlis Kostas Smoriginas

Three star solo singers will join us for the second piece this evening: Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*. And after the interval, Juliana will return as soloist in the song *Waving Farewell*.



London Philharmonic Orchestra

Tonight there are over 100 LPO musicians on stage. Our musicians represent over 14 different nationalities, and many enjoy busy solo, chamber and teaching careers alongside their orchestral work.

Turn to page 6 to see a full player list.



London Philharmonic Choir

The LPC is made up of volunteers whose members all sing alongside their day jobs, but share a commitment to the highest professional standards. The Choir gives world-class performances in major concert halls worldwide with the LPO and other orchestras.

Turn to page 10 to see a full singer list.

What to expect

Take your seats...

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



16 min

Vítězslava Kaprálová *Rustic Suite*

Kaprálová's Suite is alive with earthy folk colours and a confident, individual voice rooted in her Czech homeland.

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



23 min

Karol Szymanowski *Stabat Mater*

The soloists and choir join the stage.
The text of this piece is a Polish version of the medieval *Stabat Mater* hymn, describing the Virgin Mary standing at the foot of the Cross, grieving for the crucified Christ. Throughout its six sections, the music traces Mary's journey from intimate grief to moments of prayer and, finally, a sense of consolation.

Interval 20 min



6 min

Vítězslava Kaprálová *Waving Farewell*

with soprano Juliana Grigoryan
A second piece by Vítězslava Kaprálová – this time a short, heartfelt song.



48 min

Béla Bartók *The Wooden Prince*

Our longest piece of the night brings the concert to a dramatic close. Bartók's music bursts with sharp-edged strings, tangy winds and earthy percussion. Originally written for a ballet, it's full of movement and momentum, unfolding like a wordless story towards a bold, theatrical finale.

After the final piece, we applaud the Orchestra. The conductor will acknowledge the Leader (chief First Violin), Alice, and might highlight other players for particular appreciation and applause, with rounds of bows bringing the evening to a celebratory close.

Want to read more? Turn to page 11 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.

Printed with the planet in mind

The paper used for LPO 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. If you don't want to take your programme home, please use the recycling bins in the Royal Festival Hall foyers.



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LPO news

Behind the scenes with LPO Friends

Earlier today, LPO Friends enjoyed exclusive, behind-the-scenes access to a Private Members' Rehearsal with the Orchestra, conductor Ed Gardner and the soloists and Choir ahead of tonight's concert.



If you'd like to see for yourself what goes into putting on an LPO concert – plus enjoy a host of other amazing benefits, like a private bar space and meeting our musicians – join our family of LPO Friends today, from just £6 per month!

Scan the QR code or visit lpo.org.uk/friends to find out more.

Foyle Future Firsts

The LPO's Foyle Future Firsts programme bridges the transition between education and the music profession for 16 early-career orchestral musicians each year.

Before tonight's concert, our current cohort of Future Firsts joined forces with students from the Royal Academy of Music and LPO members for a free pre-concert performance on the Royal Festival Hall stage. Under conductor Edward Gardner, they performed music by Ligeti and Bartók.

Applications for the 2026/27 Future Firsts programme open in March – to find out more, visit lpo.org.uk/fff

Glyndebourne 2026

Since 1964, we've been Resident Symphony Orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, spending our summers in the heart of the Sussex countryside. Another summer of world-class opera awaits this year, when we'll perform in Puccini's *Tosca* – its first staging at Glyndebourne – as well as a new production of Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, both under conductor Robin Ticciati. We're also looking forward to performing in revivals of Britten's *Billy Budd* under Nicholas Carter, and Rossini's comedy *Il turco in Italia* under Vincenzo Milletari.

The 2026 Festival runs from 21 May–31 August, and booking opens from 8 March at glyndebourne.com

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 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

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'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 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.

An avid chamber musician, Alice has collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, Anthony Marwood and Gil Shaham, and performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. 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.

Next month (21 March), Alice will perform as soloist in Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* with the Orchestra at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, in an exciting concert featuring live tango dance.

On stage tonight

First Violins

Alice Ivy-Pemberton Leader
Vesselin Gellev 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

Martin Höhmann

Thomas Eisner

Chair supported by Ryze Power

Yang Zhang

Wing Yan Alison Kwok

Nilufar Alimaksumova

Rasa Zukauskaitė

Alison Strange

Ronald Long

Camille Buitenhuis

Daniel Pukach

Tayfun Bomboz

Rebecca Dinning

Second Violins

Tania Mazzetti Principal

Chair supported by The Candide
Trust

Claudia Tarrant-Matthews

Coco Inman

Sophie Phillips

Chair supported by Friends of the
Orchestra

Nancy Elan

Ashley Stevens

Marie-Anne Mairesse

Kate Birchall

Sioni Williams

Vera Beumer

Ricky Gore

Anna Croad

Caroline Sharp

Olivia Ziani

Violas

Benjamin Roskams

Guest Principal

Melissa Dattas

Katharine Leek

Benedetto Pollani

Lucia Ortiz Sauco

Laura Vallejo

Martin Wray

Chair supported by David & Bettina
Harden

James Heron

Michelle Bruil

Stanislav Popov

Kate De Campos

Toby Warr

Cellos

Henry Shapard Principal

Wayne Kwon

Chair supported by an anonymous
donor

David Lale

Francis Bucknall

Helen Thomas

Iain Ward

Hee Yeon Cho

Rasmus Støier Andersen

Julia Morneweg

Double Basses

Kevin Rundell* Principal

Hugh Kluger

George Peniston

Laura Murphy

Chair supported by Ian Ferguson
& Susan Tranter

Ben Havinden-Williams

Catherine Ricketts

Thea Sayer

Flutes

Juliette Bausor Principal

Chair supported by Malcolm & Alison
Thwaites

Daniel Shao

Stewart McIlwham*

Katherine Bicknell

Piccolos

Stewart McIlwham* Principal

Katherine Bicknell

Oboes

Ian Hardwick* Principal

Alice Munday

Chair supported by David & Yi Buckley

Sue Böhling*

Ilid Jones

Cors Anglais

Sue Böhling* Principal

Chair supported by Dr Barry Grimaldi

Ilid Jones

Clarinets

Benjamin Mellefont* Principal

Chair supported by Sir Nigel
Boardman & Prof. Lynda Gratton

Magdalenna Krstevska

Bethany Crouch

Paul Richards*

E-flat Clarinet

Bethany Crouch

Bass Clarinet

Paul Richards* Principal

Saxophones

Martin Robertson

Ethan Townsend

Bassoons

Jonathan Davies* Principal

Chair supported by Sir Simon Robey

Lorna West

Simon Estell*

Llinos Owen

Contrabassoons

Simon Estell* Principal

Llinos Owen

Horns

Annemarie Federle Principal

Chair supported by Victoria Robey
CBE

John Ryan* Principal

Martin Hobbs

Mark Vines Co-Principal

Gareth Mollison

Trumpets

Paul Beniston* Principal

Chair supported by the Williams
family in memory of Grenville
Williams

Tom Nielsen* Principal

Anne McAneney*

David Hilton

Joe Skypala

Cornets

Tom Nielsen

Tom Watts

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

Oliver Yates

Feergus Brennan

Sarah Mason

Harps

Céline Saout Guest Principal

Tomos Xerri

Celeste

Catherine Edwards

Clódna Shanahan

Piano

Catherine Edwards

Organ

Clódna Shanahan

Assistant Conductor

Nefeli Chadouli

Surtitles

James Ling-Locke

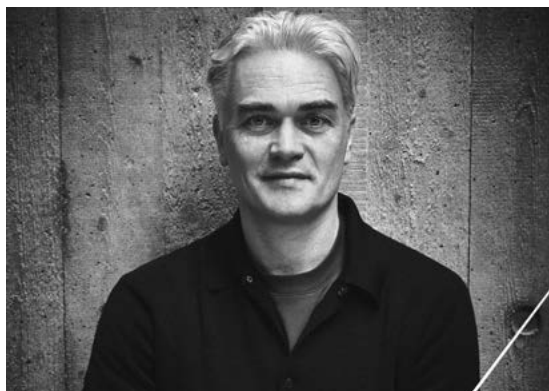
**Professor at a London
conservatoire*

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

Roger Greenwood
Bianca & Stuart Roden
Neil Westreich

Edward Gardner

Principal Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra



© Jason Bell

Edward Gardner has been Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2021. He is also Music Director of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet and Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, following his tenure as Chief Conductor from 2015–24.

Tonight is the second of two LPO programmes this week spotlighting 20th-century Central European composers; other highlights this season include symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Brahms and Rachmaninov, and a semi-staged performance of Berg's opera *Wozzeck* to end the season. In October 2025 he and the Orchestra embarked on a tour to South Korea, and December saw a tour of major cities in Germany.

Edward opened his second season as Music Director of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet with *Rusalka* and concert performances of Kurtág's *Fin de partie*. Later this spring he will conduct *Don Carlos* and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. June sees concert performances of Wagner's *The Ring Without Words*, and next season the opera house will begin its journey towards a complete *Ring Cycle* in the 2028/29 season.

In demand as a guest conductor, this season Edward returns to orchestras in the USA including the Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony and National Symphony orchestras, and makes his debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. In Europe he conducts the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. In Tokyo he makes his debut with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.

An acclaimed opera conductor, in spring 2025 Edward was re-invited to London's Royal Opera House to conduct the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*, having made his Covent Garden debut with *Káťa Kabanová*. In June 2025 he returned to the Bavarian State Opera for *Rusalka*, following *Peter Grimes* in 2022 and Verdi's *Otello* in 2023. Music Director of English National Opera for eight years (2007–15), he has also built a strong relationship with New York's Metropolitan Opera, and has conducted at La Scala, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera and the Opéra National de Paris.

Edward Gardner has recorded extensively with the Bergen Philharmonic on the Chandos label, including most recently *Salome*, as well as a Grammy-nominated Janáček *Glagolitic Mass*. Other recent critically acclaimed releases include *Der fliegende Holländer* with Lise Davidsen, Gerald Finley and the Norwegian National Opera for Decca.

November 2025 saw the release on the LPO Label of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* conducted by Edward Gardner, recorded live at the 2022 BBC Proms. In September 2025, the label released his recording of Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir. This was Edward's third Tippett release on the label, following *The Midsummer Marriage* – which won a 2023 Gramophone Award – and the Second Symphony and Piano Concerto with Steven Osborne in 2024. He has also released on the label works by Berlioz, Rachmaninov, Dvořák, Schumann and Britten. In 2024, he and the LPO featured in a Sky Arts series: 'Backstage with the London Philharmonic Orchestra', which was nominated for a BAFTA.

A passionate supporter of young talent, Edward founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra in 2002 and regularly conducts the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has a close relationship with the Juilliard School of Music, and with the Royal Academy of Music.

Born in Gloucester in 1974, Edward was educated at the University of Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music, and gained early recognition as Assistant Conductor of the Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. His many accolades include the Royal Philharmonic Society Conductor of the Year Award (2008), an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera (2009) and an OBE for Services to Music in The Queen's Birthday Honours (2012).

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

Juliana Grigoryan

soprano



© Lusine Grigoryan

Armenian soprano Juliana Grigoryan is among the most promising talents of her generation. Winner of the First Prize and Audience Prize at the Operalia Competition in 2022, she has graced prestigious stages such as the Teatro alla Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Dutch National Opera, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Teatro Massimo di Palermo and Arena di Verona. In 2022, she was named the Grand Prize Winner at the International Stanisław Moniuszko Vocal Competition in Poland.

Juliana has just completed an acclaimed run as Liù in *Turandot* at London's Royal Ballet & Opera, a role she also recently sang at the Dutch National Opera. Other recent successes include Mimi in *La bohème* at the Ravenna Festival, and her debut at the Royal Opera House Muscat as Violetta in *La traviata*. Concert highlights have included performances in Basel, Budapest, Geneva, Vienna and Prague, as well as Verdi's *Requiem* under Riccardo Muti in Ravenna, Rimini and Bologna. In October 2024, Juliana returned to her hometown of Yerevan to share the stage with Plácido Domingo at the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall, in a concert that met with extraordinary public acclaim. In 2024, Juliana was awarded the prestigious Hildegard Behrens Prize. She was also honoured to become a stage partner of Andrea Bocelli during his European and American concert tours.

Tonight is Juliana's London Philharmonic Orchestra debut. Other highlights of the 2025/26 season include *La bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera and the Munich State Opera; and Liù in *Turandot* at Atlanta Opera and the Metropolitan Opera, as well as at London's Royal Ballet & Opera. She will also perform in various concerts with distinguished artists such as Plácido Domingo, Andrea Bocelli and many others.

Agnieszka Rehlis

mezzo-soprano



© Karpat & Zarewicz

Winner of the 2022 Gloria Artis Award, Polish mezzo-soprano Agnieszka Rehlis's 2025/26 season features appearances as Amneris in *Aida* at the Washington National Opera, and as Liza in Weinberg's *The Passenger* at the Polish National Opera. On the concert stage, as well as her LPO debut this evening, she will also sing Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* at the Teatro Filarmonico di Verona, Verdi's *Requiem* at Műpa Budapest and at Zurich Opera, and *Il trittico* in concert with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Last season saw Agnieszka return to London's Royal Ballet & Opera and make her debut at the Berlin State Opera as Azucena in *Il trovatore*, as well as appearances as Amneris (*Aida*) at the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the Arena di Verona, and as Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*) at the Royal Opera House Muscat and Opernhaus Zürich. She also performed Verdi's *Requiem* with Le Cercle de l'Harmonie at Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

Past seasons' engagements include her 2022 Royal Opera debut as Amneris in *Aida* – a role she has also sung at Opera Frankfurt and the Arena di Verona Festival – and appearances at Zurich Opera in Verdi's *Requiem*, and at the Salzburg Easter Festival as La Cieca in *La Gioconda*.

An accomplished performer of contemporary music, Agnieszka Rehlis has performed in concert works by Krzysztof Penderecki, including the 2005 world premiere of his Symphony No. 8. She also features on the Grammy Award-winning Warner Classics album 'Penderecki conducts Penderecki'.

Kostas Smoriginas

bass-baritone



© Monika Penkikū

Lithuanian bass-baritone Kostas Smoriginas made his London Philharmonic Orchestra debut in September 2024 in Rachmaninov's *The Bells* at the Royal Festival Hall under Edward Gardner. The acclaimed performance was later released on the LPO Label.

Engagements in 2025/26 include Giorgio Germont (*La traviata*) with the Bergen National Opera and the Bregenz Festival, Jochanaan (*Salome*) for the Israeli Opera, The King's Herald (*Lohengrin*) with the Hungarian State Opera, and concerts with the Berlin Radio Symphony, Gothenburg Symphony and Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestras.

Recent highlights include his Bavarian State Opera debut as The King's Herald, a return to the Royal Ballet & Opera as Escamillo (*Carmen*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*) in Valencia, and Jochanaan with the Zurich Opera House. Previously he has performed with the San Francisco, Washington National, Santa Fe, Lithuanian National and Norwegian operas, the houses of Bordeaux, Lausanne, Rouen, Hamburg, Hannover, Dresden and Cologne, La Monnaie, Berlin State Opera, Teatro alla Scala Milan, and the Salzburg Easter and Aix-en-Provence festivals. He has appeared in concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Andris Nelsons), Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Sir Antonio Pappano), London Symphony Orchestra (Valery Gergiev), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and at the BBC Proms.

Kostas Smoriginas graduated from the Lithuanian Music & Theatre Academy and London's Royal College of Music. He was a member of the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House, and represented Lithuania at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition.

Our next concert with the London Philharmonic Choir

Saturday 28 March 2026
7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall

Beethoven's Ninth

Tan Dun Choral Concerto: Nine
(UK premiere)
Beethoven Symphony No. 9

Tan Dun conductor
Elizabeth Watts soprano
Hongni Wu mezzo-soprano
John Findon tenor
Dingle Yandell bass-baritone
London Philharmonic Choir
London Chinese Philharmonic Choir

Beethoven sought to embrace all humanity in his Ninth Symphony, and Tan Dun follows suit in his choral concerto *Nine*, blending ancient Chinese and European poetry into an 'ode to peace'. He joins the London Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir, plus the London Chinese Philharmonic Choir, to conduct its UK premiere alongside Beethoven's world-changing Ninth.

lpo.org.uk/whatson

London Philharmonic Choir

Patron HRH Princess Alexandra **President** Sir Mark Elder **Chorus Director Emeritus** Neville Creed
Chorus Director Madeleine Venner **Associate Chorus Director** Victoria Longdon
Guest Associate Chorus Director Bo Wang **Accompanist** Jonathan Beatty **Language Coach** Natalia Brzezinska
Chair Tessa Bartley **Choir Manager** Natasha Sofia

Founded in 1947 as the chorus for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Choir is widely regarded as one of Britain's finest choirs. For the last seven decades the Choir has performed under leading conductors, consistently meeting with critical acclaim and recording regularly for television and radio.

Enjoying a close relationship with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Choir frequently joins it for concerts in the UK and abroad. Recent concerts with LPO Principal Conductor Edward Gardner have included John Adams's *Harmonium*, Rachmaninov's *The Bells* and Mahler's Symphony No. 8. Other highlights have included Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* and the UK premiere of James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Choir's President, Sir Mark Elder; Haydn's *Missa in tempore belli* with Vladimir Jurowski; and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13 with Andrey Boreyko.

The Choir appears annually at the BBC Proms, where performances have included works by John Luther Adams, Beethoven, Busoni, Elgar, Ligeti, Orff, Vaughan Williams and Verdi, not forgetting the greatly enjoyable *Doctor Who* Proms. In 2024 for the first time, the Choir took part in the 'Films in Concert' series at the Royal Albert Hall, performing the score for *Amadeus*.

A well-travelled choir, it has visited several European countries as well as further afield. The Choir was delighted to travel to the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, in December 2017 to perform Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Choir prides itself on its inclusive culture, achieving first-class performances from its members, who are volunteers from all walks of life.

lpc.org.uk



Supported by **HighQ**

Sopranos

Annette Argent
Chris Banks
Hilary Bates
Holly Beckmyer
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Programme notes

Introduction

by tonight's programme note writer, Gavin Plumley

The First World War brought devastation to millions. Yet the subsequent collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ensured that various nation states in Central and Eastern Europe were finally able to claim their independence from the Habsburgs. Heralded by great surges in cultural endeavour, marked by movements such as Young Poland and Skamander, the Sokol clubs of the Czech lands and the Hungarian journal

Nyugat, independence also fostered the careers of composers Bartók, Janáček and Szymanowski, as well as their less celebrated compatriots. Together with last Wednesday's Royal Festival Hall concert, tonight's programme forms a mini-series titled *Phoenix Lands*, placing this repertoire – and the mythologies and folk music that inspired it – centre stage.

Vítězslava Kaprálová 1915–40

Rustic Suite, Op. 19 1938

1. Moderato

2. Andante

3. Allegro



Thanks to the encouragement of her father, likewise a composer, the Brno-born Czech composer Vítězslava Kaprálová began her musical studies in her hometown. Sadly, she missed the opportunity of being taught by Janáček, who died in 1928, though she was able to benefit from the rich legacy he left behind.

Kaprálová went on to study in Prague, before moving to Paris, where she met fellow composer Bohuslav Martinů. He promptly fell in love with the brilliant young Kaprálová, though she married the writer Jiří Mucha, son of the famous artist Alfons Mucha, before tragically dying of typhoid fever at just 25 years old. Kaprálová's life was short, yet her catalogue still reached 25 opus numbers – two of which we hear tonight.

The *Rustic Suite* was written in 1938, the year Kaprálová returned to her homeland, although this trip was cut short due to the increased threat of war. Following demands from her publishers, Universal Edition, she completed the Suite in just a month. It is richly imbued with the harmonic profile of the music of Moravia, which had previously inspired Janáček's idiom. Here, however, it is wedded to Kaprálová's longstanding love of Stravinsky's *Petrushka*.

Having graduated from Brno – marked by the premiere of her Piano Concerto, which she conducted –

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Karol Szymanowski

1882–1937

Stabat Mater

1925–26

Juliana Grigoryan *soprano*

Agnieszka Rehlis *mezzo-soprano*

Kostas Smoriginas *bass*

London Philharmonic Choir

1. *Stała Matka bolejąca (Stabat mater dolorosa)*
2. *I któż widział tak cierpiącą (Quis est homo qui non fleret)*
3. *O Matko Źródło Wszechmiłości (O, Eia, Mater, fons amoris)*
4. *Spraw niech płaczą z Tobą razem (Fac me tecum pie flere)*
5. *Panno słodka racz mozołem (Virgo virginum praeclara)*
6. *Chrystus niech mi będzie grodem (Christe, cum sit hinc exire)*

Zakopane in southern Poland had been Szymanowski's favourite retreat since his youth. From 1922 onwards, however, he divided his time permanently between Warsaw and the Tatra mountains, before deciding to settle in a beautiful wooden villa named Atma in the 1930s. Only financial difficulties towards the very end of his life forced Szymanowski to give up his home in Zakopane, as well as his strong connections to the local highlander culture.

Typified by its sheep-herding rituals and highly decorated architecture and clothing, as well as an attendant sense of pride, Gorále art, music and literature prompted Szymanowski to call on his fellow composers to embrace more domestic traditions. 'Let our music be national in its Polish characteristics,' he wrote during the 1920s, 'but not falter in striving to attain universality. Let it be national, but not provincial.' In this, he was echoing the principles of the Skamander movement, which had eschewed the mythological tropes of Young Poland,

of which Szymanowski had been a major player at the turn of the last century, instead embracing the life and culture of everyday people.

These ideas fed into Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* in 1925–26, though the work stemmed from an initial request from the Princesse de Polignac (Winnaretta Singer), who was well known as a generous musical patron. When she and Szymanowski then lost touch, her appeal for 'a kind of Polish Requiem' began to morph, not least when the industrialist Bronisław Krystall asked for a work in memory of his late wife – to whom the composition is duly dedicated. And then Szymanowski lost his own beloved niece, Alusia Bartoszewiczówna, after which the ancient words of the *Stabat Mater*, describing the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross, were of particular comfort to him and his sister.

Setting the text, Szymanowski decided not to use the original Latin but Józef Janowski's demotic Polish

Programme notes

translation. Its folkloristic tone perfectly suited the composer's love of local tropes, while the text also brings out the latent violence of the 13th-century hymn: 'grant that I too may be killed at the executioner's hand, that I may share in the agony and suffer the blood-stained blows'. The score nods to wider liturgical traditions, not least the music of Palestrina, yet it is the soundworld of the Tatras that wins through, including two traditional Polish hymn tunes, 'Święty Boże' and 'Gorzkie żale', as well as the ancient Podhalean mode, with its characteristic sharpened fourth.

Sublimating these facets into a unique whole, Szymanowski created a searching and otherworldly composition. 'I sought an inner experience,' he

explained, 'endeavouring to give a concrete, concise form to what is most real and yet most intangible in the secret life of the mind.' At times, the work can seem distant and suspended, simultaneously antique in its gesture yet modern in its passing moments of muscularity. Reflecting intense states of grief, it nonetheless transcends any personal circumstances. And while its universal prayer calls back to the Renaissance, it also looks ahead, not least to the words of Helena Wanda Błażusiakówna, a highland woman who was imprisoned by the Gestapo in Zakopane in 1944, and which were later set to music by Henryk Górecki in his Third Symphony of 1976–77, the 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs'.

Interval – 20 minutes

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

Vítězslava Kaprálová
1915–40

Waving Farewell, Op. 14
1937

Juliana Grigoryan *soprano*

The second piece by Vítězslava Kaprálová we hear tonight is the song *Sbohem a šáteček* ('Waving Farewell'). It is a setting of the Czech poet Vítězslav Nezval, who originally studied with Janáček before embarking on his literary career. Nezval was a key surrealist in the Czech lands and a member of the avant-garde movement Devětsil, which spanned a huge range of artistic disciplines. His beautifully guileless

poem 'Sbohem a šáteček' is particularly well-known to Czech schoolchildren. Delivered as if from one person to another, it touches on various forms of farewell: of a ship leaving harbour; of lovers remembering shared moments past; and of birds in migratory flight. Set by Kaprálová when she left Brno to study in Prague, the song was orchestrated in 1938, the last time she saw home.

Programme notes

Béla Bartók

1881–1945

The Wooden Prince

Pantomime ballet in one act

1917

1. *Prelude*

2. *Dance of the Princess in the Forest*

3. *Dance of the Trees*

4. *Dance of the Waves*

5. *The Prince and his Wooden Doll*

6. *Dance of the Princess with the Wooden Doll*

8. *Postlude*



The Wooden Prince was to be one of Bartók's most popular compositions. It was the product of particularly concerted work during the First World War, when the Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist's extensive fieldwork was curtailed due to the hostilities. Instead, he focussed on compositions for the stage, both this pantomime ballet and his only opera, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, both of which were created in collaboration with the writer Béla Balázs.

Like the text of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Balázs favoured demotic poetry – using the spoken language of ordinary people. His libretto for *Bluebeard*, originally intended for his flatmate Zoltán Kodály, was a strong case in point. Removing the 'happily ever after' ending of Charles Perrault's tale, he formed a more psychological rendering of the story told in a manifestly Hungarian tongue.

The same was true of Balázs and Bartók's subsequent project, which developed out of a visit to Budapest by the Ballets Russes in 1912 (between the creation of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*). The following year, the opera house in the Hungarian capital asked Bartók for a new work, which he decided to base

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on a story Balázs had published in the influential literary journal *Nyugat*. The project took until 1917 to complete, though it quickly became one of Bartók's most widely performed works – to the composer's own annoyance, as it often overshadowed pieces he considered far superior.

The ballet tells the story of a prince who cannot reach his princess and instead decides to use a scarecrow version of himself to attract her attention. As a whole, the ballet reflects what Balázs called the 'common and profound tragedy when the creation becomes the rival of the creator, and of the pain and glory of the situation in which a woman prefers the poem to the poet, the picture to the painter'.

Reflecting the 'artificial' elements in the story, Bartók crafted a conspicuous, though no less ingenious, musical structure. A symphonic poem in all but name, the score is in three parts, in which the third recalls the first, albeit in reverse order. Within this mirror-like structure – looking to the arch forms of Bartók's later works, including his final string quartets and the evergreen Concerto for Orchestra – the music constantly juxtaposes the character of the prince and that of his puppet, who naturally share the same

material, albeit in a different guise. But it is the score's sheer vivacity that wins through, including its cheeky nods to Wagner's *Das Rheingold* at the opening, vivid scene-painting recalling Richard Strauss – an early touchstone for Bartók, before he turned to more local music – and the kaleidoscopic brilliance of the Ballets Russes. Clearly, Diaghilev had missed a trick by not commissioning Bartók when his company visited Budapest.

Programme notes © Gavin Plumley

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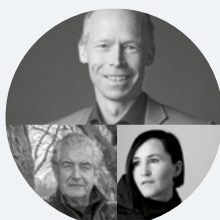
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